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# The Reformed Review

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## THE PLACE OF THE COVENANT IN CALVIN'S THINKING

ELTON M. EENIGENBURG

In the modern period churches of the Reformed type have tended to regard themselves as giving a kind of traditional adherence to this or that form of the covenant theology. In more cases than not, however, the relationship to that peculiar brand of theology has been one of "nodding acquaintance," rather than of intimate fellowship, something like that of a person's attachment to an old creed or confession which he has never taken the time to read through. Nevertheless, just because the origin and early development of the Reformed churches can not very well be understood apart from the covenant theology, the modern Reformed man feels that he must, willy-nilly, accept it, or he may cease to be a genuine Reformed man. And since the covenant theology has had a rather honourable career, it lends a kind of gracious dignity to one to own to his share in so fine a legacy, whether or not his present most compelling theological convictions comport with that venerable tradition. In a few of the Reformed churches, one must quickly add, the covenant theology has been taken with a greater seriousness, and honest attempts are made to relate the issues of that theology to contemporary concerns. But in the majority of the Reformed communions, where theological convictions quite openly liberal (or, as some have put it, "evangelical in the broad sense") and Arminian are openly expressed, covenant theology can command little more attachment to it than that indicated above. In communions of this type what interest there is today in the subject is quite antiquarian. There is a very minor revival of interest in the theme at the present time, seemingly occasioned mainly by the much larger revival of Puritan studies, of which covenant theology is but an aspect. In this country the largest credit for the revival will have to be given to a secular man of letters, Perry Miller of Harvard University. Other scholars, some of them oriented theologically, have been hard at work. It would be quite normal to ask, in the light of this scholarly concern for Puritanism, and with it for the origin and nature of the covenant theology, whether one may look for a widespread revival of covenant theology in our own time, just as renewed studies in Luther, Calvin, and Kierkegaard have seemed to produce new races of Lutherans, Calvinists, and Kierkegaardians. For the present, at least, there is no indication of this, perhaps partly because it is much easier to declare allegiance to a dynamic personality than to an organizing principle. A more important

reason is that the covenant theology simply does not "fit" into modern man's Protestantism; it is part of a total attitude or religious point of view which few today, comparatively speaking, are willing to call their own. Certain aspects of covenant theology, certain emphases it consistently made, will be found to be quite acceptable and even useful. But the "framework," the "structure" as such will continue to be condemned for more reasons than one. It all represents a presumptuous "scholasticism" the modern Protestant can not receive to his bosom.

A question of considerable significance in the contemporary discussion is whether John Calvin himself was, or was not, a covenant theologian. Since the Reformed churches have owned Calvin as their spiritual and theological father, a proper answer to the question is not without value. That is, at this point the inquiry can not be merely antiquarian; it has become a matter of basic loyalty to the founder. If it should be found that Calvin was indeed a bona fide covenant theologian, there will be no cause for unrest, for this is precisely what many in the Reformed tradition have always assumed him to have been. If, however, inquiry reveals him to have been something other than a covenant theologian, the dim consciousness that one is Reformed, but not quite Calvinistic, may bring with it some disquiet. Can one be at the same time Reformed and non-Calvinistic at a vital point? To be sure, many today would regard this dilemma as quite archaic. History has proved abundantly that one can never be wholly true to his origins. We have only variants, a more or a less, never quite the original. Others, however, principally those who still regard the covenant theology with some seriousness, will be troubled with a negative answer to the question. Still a third possibility is that John Calvin was a covenant theologian only in the sense that he was a theologian who found it necessary to speak about the covenant again and again.<sup>1</sup> The covenant would be for him an inescapable biblical fact, like sin or salvation. It might bulk large as a material element in his thought without ever becoming a formal principle of explanation. If Calvin was a covenant theologian in this quite limited sense, there is a rather significant difference between himself and the great company of Calvinist theologians who followed thereafter. There may still be substantial agreement between them as far as principal theological details are concerned, and as far as certain specific emphases are made, but there may also be a substantial difference between them when the total theological construct and the impression it lays are considered. That is to say, Calvin and Calvinism may not be quite so identical as many conservative Calvinists have felt them to be. But this should not prejudge the question as to whether

<sup>1</sup>"Calvin indeed used the word 'covenant' very frequently. He could not have written on Biblical topics without so doing." L. J. Trinterud, "The Origins of Puritanism," *Church History*, March, 1951, p. 56, note.

Calvinism is a step down or a step up from Calvin. Perry Miller, at least, appears to enter the lists on the side of Calvinism:

. . . students of technical theology have long since realized that Calvinism was in the process of modification by the year 1630. There had come to be numerous departures from or developments within the pristine creed, and "Calvinism" in the seventeenth century covered almost as many shades of opinion as does "socialism" in the twentieth. The New England leaders did not stem directly from Calvin; they learned the Calvinist theology only after it had been improved, embellished, and in many respects transformed by a host of hard-thinking expounders and critics. The system had been thoroughly gone over by Dutchmen and Scotchmen, and nothing ever left the hands of these shrewd peoples precisely as it came to them; furthermore, for seventy years or more English theologians had been mulling it over, tinkering and remodelling, rearranging emphases, and, in the course of adapting it to Anglo-Saxon requirements, generally blurring its Gallic clarity and incisiveness.

Much of this adaptation was necessitated because, to a later and more critical generation, there were many conundrums which Calvin, and all the first Reformers for that matter, had not answered in sufficient detail. He had left too many loopholes, too many openings for Papist disputants to thrust in embarrassing questions. His object had been to compose a sublime synthesis of theology; he sketched out the main design, the architectural framework in broad and free strokes. He did not fill in details, he did not pretend to solve the metaphysical riddles inherent in the doctrine. He wrote in the heyday of Protestant faith and crusading zeal, and it is not too much to say that he was so carried along by the ecstasy of belief that an assertion of the true doctrine was for him sufficient in and for itself. There was no need then for elaborate props and buttresses, for cautious logic and fine-spun argumentation.<sup>2</sup>

Granted that Calvin and Calvinism are not quite the same thing, and leaving aside the question as to whether Calvinism represents an improvement upon Calvin or is a degenerate form of the same, this writer is convinced that the idea of the covenant in Calvin is something other than the covenant theology of the later Calvinists. Whereas for John Koch (Cocceius) and William Ames, and a host of others, the adjective in the term "covenant theologian" controls the noun, for Calvin the adjective has a somewhat descriptive value. From an historical point of view, it is probably not correct to call Calvin a covenant theologian at all,<sup>3</sup> even though the covenant idea was regarded by him with all seriousness, for the term has been historically conditioned to refer to those whose theology has been controlled and directed by the covenant concept to the point of giving it a quite specific construction, as well as a quite peculiar content, by virtue of its governance by the concept. Though Calvin everywhere in his commentaries, and to a limited extent in his *Institutes*, deals

<sup>2</sup>Miller, Perry, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, Transactions, 1933-37, Boston: Published by the Society, Vol. XXXII, pp. 247-48.

<sup>3</sup>"Calvin, like many others, spoke of a divine covenant. But the covenant is not basic in his system. So he is not regarded as a covenant theologian." E. H. Emerson, "Calvin and Covenant Theology," *Church History*, June, 1956, p. 136.

*What do you think?*

with covenant matters, nowhere does it become for him a principle of an all-controlling or all-explanatory nature.

The covenant theology describes a special type of Christian thought which gives this idea a central importance not elsewhere assigned to it, and uses it as the organizing principle of the entire theological system. According to this scheme, God at the Creation entered into an agreement with Adam as the federal head of the race, promising to him and to his descendants eternal life on condition of his obedience to the Divine command that he should not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and threatening him with eternal death for himself and his descendants in case of his disobedience. Adam having failed to stand the test, God entered into a second agreement with Christ as the second Adam, on behalf of the elect, promising them forgiveness and eternal life in consideration of Christ's perfect obedience and satisfaction imputed to them by faith, as well as all the gifts and graces which are necessary to the realization of this supreme blessing in experience. The covenant theology in its developed form is a scheme of doctrine in which the entire system of divinity is expressed in the terms of these two covenants, and man's assurance of salvation based upon the fact that he is included within the latter.<sup>4</sup>

It is not the purpose of this essay to delineate further the differences between Calvin and Calvinism, or between the idea of the covenant in Calvin and the covenant theology. The differences are many and considerable, and fortunately some very fine researches have been made, and are being made, in this area. Having noted that Calvin constantly speaks of the covenant, we are ready to observe also that he does so in great detail. It should be observed at this point, too, that a sufficient appreciation and knowledge of Calvin's views on the covenant and its place in his thinking will not be gained from a study of the *Institutes* alone. As a matter of fact, the covenant element in the *Institutes* is relatively minor. In his commentaries, on the other hand, it appears for discussion as often as the biblical text under analysis requires it. Further, though Calvin is found to explicate again and again the details of the covenant scheme, he can not be found to argue its reality. That is always presupposed. Neither, as we have before observed, does he "lift" the covenant idea from the Scriptures with a view to making it some kind of conceptual tool or instrument for the manipulation of other elements of Christian belief. Its "place," in other words, is precisely what it is in the Bible itself, a constitutive, living component of the biblical expression of God's dealing with man.

*d. 11*

Calvin defines a covenant as "that which is expressed in distinct and accustomed words, and contains a mutual stipulation, as that which was made with Abraham.<sup>5</sup> The bare words of this definition would be very

<sup>4</sup>Brown, W. A., "Covenant Theology," *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. IV., p. 216.

<sup>5</sup>Comm. on Romans 9:4.

misleading, if taken at their face value. It might seem to suggest a rather rigid, legal type of contract or agreement, and there is no question that quite a few of the Puritan fathers of the later period came to look upon God's covenant in some such fashion. There were also occasions when Calvin himself seemed to speak in this wise, but his words can be interpreted in this manner only if they are taken out of context. "Agreement" and "compact," and similar expressions, have with Calvin a rhetorical rather than a literal force. By using them he attempts to remind his readers of the great seriousness with which the covenant must be regarded. In a *religious* sense, rather than in a cold, contractual sense, God's people are faced with his holy requirement on their lives. And his demand upon them is never less severe merely because it is not legal. As a matter of fact, it is actually more severe just because something more than mere mental acquiescence is required. The covenanted man loves and serves God with all the mind, soul, and strength. Calvin often used terms of great warmth and tenderness to express the biblical sense of God's relationship to man. For example the following:

The Lord very frequently addresses us in the character of a husband; the union by which he connects us with himself, when he receives us into the bosom of the Church, having some resemblance to that of holy wedlock, because founded on mutual faith. As he performs all the offices of a true and faithful husband, so he stipulates for love and conjugal chastity from us; that is, that we do not prostitute our souls to Satan, to be defiled with foul carnal lusts.<sup>6</sup>

It should be observed here that Calvin never treats of the covenant in terms which suggest simple status. Not only would that imply too abstract a relationship, but it would also tend to suggest that, some kind of a "deal" having been made between God and man in the long ago, relationships between the two were now quite automatic. One simply took his place in the line of heritage, as his father had done before him. Such an arrangement would be in direct defiance of the divine purpose, which is "that God may have always a people in the world, by whom he is sincerely worshipped."<sup>7</sup> To this end he "bestows on the children of the godly fear and reverence for his majesty," for if he were not to do this, they might well "imagine God to be bound to them, because they are the children of saints according to the flesh."<sup>8</sup> The accent is ever upon the exercise of grace and mercy on God's part as he sustains his part in the covenant, and upon man's full and hearty obedience in the sustentation of his. Each person in the covenant must render this obedience in love anew, and continually. To encourage him in this, God has poured forth his gracious promises upon his people. The promises which we meet

<sup>6</sup>Inst., II.8.18.

<sup>7</sup>Com. on Luke 1:50.

<sup>8</sup>Loc. cit.

~~with everywhere in the Scriptures are to be understood as flowing from the covenant as their source.~~<sup>9</sup> They are often renewed, or they appear in new forms, as evidences of God's continuing favor.

We may note, parenthetically, that Calvin regarded the covenant as coextensive with the kingdom itself. ". . . though the Israelites had the first place, and are the proper and legitimate heirs of the covenant, yet their prerogative does not hinder us from having also a title to it. In short, however far and wide the kingdom of Christ extends, this covenant of salvation is of the same extent."<sup>10</sup> Certainly Calvin never speaks of the kingdom, or of the Church, in static terms. The terms used are dynamic, moving, living; what we today call "existential." This is not, however, to suggest that the living and the dynamic are to be equated with the uncertain and the unpredictable, with absence of status of any kind for the believer. With Calvin's accent on the election of some and the reprobation of others,<sup>11</sup> he could never be accused of denying status to the believer. What is of importance to note is that the believer has status precisely because he is energized by the Spirit of God to do the will of God. If he is not found in the will and service of God in the greater part of his life, he has broken the covenant bond either temporarily or permanently. To this we shall return later.

*R. Taylor*  
Calvin never tired of laying emphasis upon the covenant being founded and continued in the divine grace and mercy. ". . . the covenant is originally constituted and perpetually remains altogether gratuitous."<sup>12</sup> He notes in this place that though David had declared that he had been rewarded "for the purity of his hands," he nevertheless does not overlook the source of his goodness in the mercy of the God who had delivered him. That gratuitous mercy "precedes all the gifts that originate from it."<sup>13</sup> Likewise, in his commentary on Psalm 89:28, remarking on the words, "And I will keep my mercy to him forever," he notes that "mercy" appears first in order in the verse before mention of the "covenant," which immediately follows, in order to point out the cause of the covenant, "that it is gratuitous, and that his grace is not only the foundation on which it rests, but also the cause why it is preserved inviolate. The amount is, that God will be always merciful to David, in order that his covenant may never fail. From this it follows, that the inviolability depends upon the mere good pleasure of God." That Calvin should place a major emphasis upon the covenant's origin and continuance in God's mercy and grace is, of course, entirely consistent with his views on the

<sup>9</sup>Comm. on Romans 9:4.

<sup>10</sup>Comm. on Hebrews 8:10.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. Comm. on Malachi 1:2-6.

<sup>12</sup>Inst., III.17.5.

<sup>13</sup>Loc. cit.

specific election of some to everlasting life. The very fact that they are elected requires that they shall be saved by an act which is wholly God's. Their description before he saves them is that they are "conceived and born in sin"; they are "dead in trespasses and sins." Apart from God's saving action in Christ, they will remain in their sins. But when they are saved, immediately they find their place in his covenant. Since the totality of the elect is coterminous with the totality of persons in the covenant, that both have their special position through his grace is obvious. This is not to say, however, that everyone who appears to be a participant in the covenant actually is, anymore than everyone who appears to be elected actually is. We are speaking here only ideally.

Not only is one's place in the covenant entirely by grace, but one's retention in the covenant is equally entirely by grace. To illustrate: in his commentary on Hebrews 8:10 Calvin first indicates how impossible it is to be saved until our hearts "are softened by him." The heart, "full of depravity and perverseness, rejects every wholesome doctrine." "We will indeed and choose freely; but our will is carried away by a sort of insane impulse to resist God." Apart from his gracious work, only corrupt affections and an evil heart is all that He can find in us. A new covenant had to be made in which God would engrave his law on our hearts, "For otherwise it would be in vain and of no effect." Calvin then discourses on our constant need of forgiveness, as he calls it, "the gratuitous pardon of sins." The reason for this is plain: many corrupt affections of the flesh still remain in us. ". . . it is only in part that the viciousness of our nature is corrected; so that evil lusts break out now and then." He refers to Paul's complaint in Romans seven. Try as we may, "we are still guilty of eternal death before God, because our life is ever very far from the perfection which the Law requires." The covenant, then, would have no stability if God did not gratuitously forgive us our sins. The faithful are ever assured that God is propitious to them, for they have this promise of pardon. It is a promise they may depend on to the end of their lives, "so that they have a daily reconciliation with God." Thus our only recourse is God's mercy.

In the commentary on Daniel 9:4 there is an extensive application of the above principle, and it will be well to reproduce it in its main lines, since it deals with the empirical situation of the old covenant people, Israel, and their special problem with respect to the covenant promises. The verse reads, "And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments." These words, says Calvin, indicate why the people have no cause to complain against God if they receive severe treatment from him.

"For where the faithfulness of God to his promises has once been laid down, men have not the slightest reason to complain when he treats them less clemently, or frustrates them because they are found fallacious and perfidious; for God always remains true to his words." God does keep his covenant with all those who love him. The word "pity" is then related to the word "covenant." These words are in corelation with one another, for together they indicate that "God made a gratuitous covenant which flows from the fountain of his pity. What, therefore, is this agreement or covenant and pity of God? The covenant flows from God's mercy; it does not spring from either the worthiness or the merits of men; it has its cause, and stability, and effect, and completion solely in the grace of God." Calvin felt it necessary to emphasize this for the reason that some would understand Daniel to be distinguishing "mercy" from "covenant," "as if there existed a mutual stipulation when God enters into covenant with man, and thus God's covenant would depend simply on man's obedience." This can be explained by observing that we have here a "form of expression" or idiom common in the Scriptures. "For whenever God's covenant is mentioned, his clemency, or goodness, or inclination to love is also added." Daniel is merely confessing the gratuitous nature of God's covenant with Israel, which has its sole cause in the gratuitous goodness of God. Daniel also points to God's faithfulness, "for he never violates his agreement nor departs from it, as in many other places God's truth and faithfulness are united with his clemency. . . . It is necessary for us to rely on God's mere goodness, as our salvation rests entirely with him, and thus we render to him the glory due to his pity, and thus it becomes needful for us, in the second place, to obtain a clear apprehension of God's clemency. The language of the Prophet expresses both these points, when he shews how God's covenant both depends upon and flows from his grace, and also when he adds the Almighty's faithfulness in keeping his agreement."

A special problem arises with respect to the proper interpretation of the words in this verse, "Towards those who love thee and keep thy commandments," but in Calvin's understanding of the words, the problem really dissolves when they are interpreted rightly. The problem is that some have become angry with God and reproach him boldly because He neither pardons them nor indulges them. Such, however, are hypocrites, for Daniel, "to check this pride and to cut off every pretence for strife on the part of the impious, says, *God is faithful towards all who love him.* He admonishes us thus: God is never severe unless when provoked by the sins of men; as if he had said, God's covenant is firm in itself; when men violate it, it is not surprising if God withdraws from his promises and departs from his agreement on perceiving himself treated with perfidy

and distrust. The people, therefore, are here obliquely condemned, while Daniel testifies to God's *constancy in keeping his promises*, if men on their part act with good faith towards him." It had become perfectly plain to the people of Israel that God had altered his usual mode of dealing with them, and that He was, in fact, exercising a severe vengeance on them, by suffering them to be expelled from Canaan, their "perpetual inheritance." No blame for this can be laid upon God, for his people had revolted against him and "by their perfidy had violated their compact." The whole blame rests with the people themselves; God is absolved from all fault.

There follows an important discussion of what true covenant love is. A mere slavish obedience or dutiful adherence to the law of God will not fill the requirement. Those who discharge their duty toward him in a perfunctory manner, perhaps for the purpose of securing his favour, discover that God will have their service from the heart, or not at all. ". . . the Prophet shews how the special object of the worship of God is to induce us to love him. . . . We must hold, therefore, the impossibility of pleasing God by obedience, unless it proceeds from a sincere and free affection of the mind. This is the very first rule in God's worship. We must love him; we must be prepared to devote ourselves entirely to obedience to him, and to the willing performance of whatever he requires from us. . . . Unless we love God we have no reason for concluding that he will approve of any of our actions: all our duties will become corrupt before him, unless they proceed from the fountain of liberal affection towards him." Love for God must always precede external observance. And sincere love for God yields not only an affection of the soul; all our "outward members" are also brought into line with this affection. "Our hands and all that belong to us will be kept steady to their duty, if this spontaneous love flourish within our hearts. For if any one asserts his love of God a thousand times over, all will be discovered to be vain and fallacious, unless the whole life correspond with it. We can never separate love and obedience."

A serious difficulty rather obviously arises from the foregoing matters. If God requires an obedience born of love if one is to retain his place in the covenant, the continuance of the covenant appears to depend, then, upon the merit of man. The final logic of the matter would seem to be that if filial love were not to be found in any man, the existence of the covenant would be terminated. Calvin knew well that this difficulty had risen in men's minds oftentimes in the past, and it would rise often enough again. It may be that it was for this reason he dealt with the problem quite extensively in the *Institutes* and commentaries. Since we have already demonstrated that Calvin clearly taught that the continuance of the

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covenant was not dependent upon man, but upon the grace and mercy of God, it will be necessary to show here how he was able to sustain this conclusion in the face of patent difficulties. Calvin resolved the difficulties by showing, first of all, that whatever acceptable obedience man yields to God is itself inspired in him by God, and is therefore not properly his own, with respect to origin, and secondly, that no matter what may happen as far as man's obedience is concerned, the covenant is a *perpetual* covenant whose perpetuity God has guaranteed. Thus the covenant ever remains completely dependent upon God's grace and mercy. We shall consider these in turn.

First, we may raise the question how God regards the "good works" of believers. Calvin grants that God faithfully rewards those who are followers of righteousness and holiness, but one must look carefully to the reason for God's approbation of these works. He finds the reason or cause to be threefold:

First, God turning his eye away from the works of his servants which merit reproach more than praise, embraces them in Christ, and by the intervention of faith alone reconciles them to himself without the aid of works. Secondly, the works not being estimated by their own worth, he, by his fatherly kindness and indulgence, honours so far as to give them some degree of value. Thirdly, he extends his pardon to them, not imputing the imperfection by which they are all polluted, and would deserve to be regarded as vices rather than virtues.<sup>14</sup>

Hence, good works are not meritorious in themselves, but must be preceded "by a justification founded on faith alone, and on forgiveness of sins—a forgiveness necessary to cleanse even good works from their stains."<sup>15</sup> The production of good works, however, is not to be thought of as proceeding out of some inner resource of the believer, for they are the work of God in him. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). Calvin put constant emphasis upon the creative power of God's Spirit in the believer's life, whether he was talking about faith, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures, the sacraments, or any of the other great biblical themes. But Calvin also understood, perhaps more realistically than any other theologian, how the human ego, receiving the good work of God, distorted and corrupted it, so that when God received it back again, he must embrace it in Christ, honour it and give it some degree of value, and apply to it his pardoning grace.

The first duty of the believer, then, is, with the help of God, to keep the covenant.<sup>16</sup> He is not forced to do so by any external compulsion, but

<sup>14</sup>Inst., III.17.3.

<sup>15</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Comm. on Leviticus 2:13: "Hence, too, is confirmed what I have said before, that the keeping of God's covenant always occupies the first place in His service."

he is constantly exhorted to do so, both by the external admonitions of the biblical revelation, and by the internal persuasions of the Holy Spirit. Hypocrites flatter themselves that they enjoy the favour of God, and degenerate children apply the promises made to their fathers to themselves, but God is merciful only to those who keep his covenant.<sup>17</sup> Commenting on the words "To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them" (Psalm 103:18), Calvin remarks that "The keeping, or observing of the covenant, which is here put instead of the fear of God, mentioned in the preceding verse, is worthy of notice; for thus David intimates that none are the true worshippers of God but those who reverently obey his Word." Such submit themselves to the Word of God and follow the rule prescribed for them by God. "As the covenant begins with a solemn article containing the promise of grace, faith and prayer are required, above all, to the proper keeping of it." On the clause, "who remember his statutes," Calvin avers that though God is continually putting us in mind of his statutes, "we soon slide away to worldly cares —are confused by a multiplicity of avocations, and are lulled asleep by many allurements. Thus forgetfulness extinguishes the light of truth, unless the faithful stir up themselves from time to time."

If, in spite of everything God does for him both by way of giving him the grace to lead the good life, and by providing him with constant forgiveness of his sins,<sup>18</sup> the professed believer nevertheless falls away, and remains fallen away, the responsibility is wholly his. He is cut off from the covenant, but the covenant itself does not suffer ill. For example, in the commentary on Isaiah 59:2 ("But your iniquities have made a separation") Calvin says: "The amount of what is said is, that they cannot say that God has changed, as if he had swerved from his natural disposition, but that the whole blame lies with themselves; because by their sins they, in some measure, prevent his kindness, and refuse to receive his assistance. Hence we infer that our sins alone deprive us of the grace of God, and cause separation between us and him; . . . Thus God is always like himself, and is not wearied in doing good; and his power is not diminished, but we hinder the entrance of his grace." A bit further on in the commentary on this verse: ". . . sometimes the frowardness of men grows to such an extent as to shut the door against God's benefits, as if they purposely intended to drive him away from them. And although he listens to no man without pardoning him . . . yet he does not listen to the prayers of the wicked." Persistence in iniquities amounts to a rejection of God's benefits. A divorce is made, "which drives away or turns aside the ordinary course of grace."

<sup>17</sup>Comm. on Psalm 103:18.

<sup>18</sup>See Comm. on Psalm 89:30-37.

By distinguishing carefully between the covenant itself and participants in the covenant, Calvin is able to argue the perpetuity of the covenant as well as the possibility of permanent apostasy for some of the participants. This must not be interpreted to mean that it is possible for any of the elect to fall away permanently. It is well known that Calvin consistently taught the "preservation" of all the elect. Those who fall away are related in some way to the covenant community, usually by blood ties, and their apostasy is evidence enough that the mark of election has not been laid upon them. Calvin, however, does not dismiss the matter in quite this way. There is never a lighthearted dispatch of the ungodly apostates with a "Well, what more could one expect of them?" He deals with them with the utmost seriousness as he tries to reflect something of God's anger and impatience with them for their diabolical wickedness. God's offer of grace and pardon to them is regarded by Calvin as bona fide. On the other hand, he dwells much on the theme of the impossibility of the covenant being broken by covenant-breakers. The historical fact that the majority of the Jews had broken the covenant always seemed to raise the question about the covenant's perpetuity or lack of it. But the unbelief of man can not neutralize the truth of God.<sup>19</sup> That truth ever remains firm and constant. The fact that the majority of the Jews were covenant breakers does not abrogate the covenant to the extent that it could not bring forth any fruit among them. If that were the case the truth of God as embodied in the covenant promises would lose its stability through man's wickedness. "Though then the greater part had nullified and trodden under foot God's covenant, it yet retained its efficacy and manifested its power, not indeed as to all, but with regard to a few of that nation: and it is then efficacious, when the grace or the blessing of the Lord avails to eternal salvation. But this cannot be, except when the promise is received by faith; for it is in this way that a mutual covenant is on both sides confirmed."<sup>20</sup> Some among the Jews, holding fast to the privileges of the covenant, had not fallen away. As the "elect remnant" they are the true inheritors of the promises. ". . . to maintain the truth and firmness of his promise, God has preserved 'a seed.' (Rom. ix. 29)"<sup>21</sup> In addition to those Jews who remained in the covenant there was added the vast company of Gentiles who were ingrafted into the same body. These latter were also called or accounted "children of Abraham," or "the genuine Israel of God."<sup>22</sup> Referring to the expression "All the seed of Israel" in Isaiah 45:25, Calvin remarks: "He extends this seed farther, that they may not suppose that it ought to be limited to the family of

<sup>19</sup>Comm. on Romans 3:3; Cf. Comm. on Psalm 132:12.

<sup>20</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>21</sup>Comm. on Luke 1:50.

<sup>22</sup>Comm. on Isaiah 45:25; Cf. Comm. on Hebrews 6:17; Micah 7:20.

22

Abraham; for the Lord gathers his people without distinction from among Jews and Gentiles, and here he speaks universally of the whole human race."

The familiar Jewish retort that since God had bound himself in covenant with the nation of Israel, he was forever bound to them by his promises, failed to take into account the distinction we have made between the covenant itself and participants in the covenant. The covenant is not an abstract Platonic idea, however, for we have noted that the covenant is an historical reality in which there have always been some persons. Nevertheless we must add that the covenant is not simply the sum of the persons who are now, or at some other time, included in it, for the covenant is basically a relationship between God and men, one about which God has made some rather careful stipulations. When participants in the covenant persistently fail to live by these stipulations, they lose their place. The covenant itself is unconditional, as we have observed, but the place of participants in it is conditional upon their effective observance of the stipulations. In the light of this, the Jewish claim that since God had adopted Abraham and his seed, he had irretrievably bound himself to the Jews as a nation fell to the ground. In Ezekiel 16:59 God says, "I will do to thee as thou hast done." To this Calvin remarks: "He says, then, that in agreement it is customary for a person, when deceived, no longer to be necessarily bound to a perfidious breaker of agreements; for covenanting requires mutual faith: but the Jews had violated their agreement, and reduced it to nothing. Hence, through their perfidy and wickedness, God had acquired the liberty of rejecting them, and of no longer reckoning them among his people . . . he could not be condemned for bad faith in departing from his agreement, because he had to deal with traitors and covenant-breakers who had rendered void their agreement: for there is no covenant when either party declines it."

It is well to emphasize at this point that Calvin secures the perpetuity of the one covenant not only by reference to the saved remnant among the Jews and to believing Gentiles. This is, after all, quite secondary. Of far greater weight is this, that the covenant promises find their true and ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. This is true in the historical sequence that "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," but it is also true in the sense that Christ was never absent from his people from the time God first made his covenant with Abraham. "Who, then, dares to represent the Jews as destitute of Christ,—them with whom we are informed the evangelical covenant was made, of which Christ is the sole foundation? Who dares to represent them as strangers to the benefit of a free salvation, to whom we are informed the doctrine of the righteousness of faith was communicated? . . . we have a remarkable expression

of the Lord: 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.' And what Christ there declares concerning Abraham, the apostle shows to have been universal among the faithful, when he says that Christ remains 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.' "<sup>23</sup> Mary and Zachariah declared in their songs (Luke 1:54, 72) "that the salvation revealed in Christ is a performance of the promises which the Lord had made to Abraham and the patriarchs. If the Lord, in the manifestation of Christ, faithfully performed his covenant oath, it cannot be denied that the end of the Old Testament was always in Christ and eternal life."<sup>24</sup> The covenant made with Abraham and his posterity had its foundation in Christ, as is indicated by the words of the covenant, "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). The covenant was ratified in the seed of Abraham, that is, in Christ.<sup>25</sup> Calvin calls into service here such texts as II Corinthians 1:20, "The promises of God are yea and amen in Christ;" Romans 15:8, where Christ is called "the minister of circumcision, to fulfil the promises which were given to the fathers;" and Ephesians 2:17, where Christ is declared to be "the peace" of all, whereby those formerly separated from him are now united in him, so that those who were far off and those who were near are reconciled to God. "Hence also it is evident that Christ was promised, not only to the Jews, but to the whole world."<sup>26</sup> The truth of God's promises is confirmed to us only when we see their fulfilment in Christ. "Forgiveness of sins is promised in the covenant, but it is in the blood of Christ. Righteousness is promised, but it is offered through the atonement of Christ. Life is promised, but it must be sought only in the death and resurrection of Christ. . . . the grace and power of Christ are not confined by the narrow limits of this fading life, but are everlasting; . . . As neither Abraham, nor any of the saints, could procure salvation to himself by his own power or merits, so to all believers, whether living or dead, the same salvation has been exhibited in Christ."<sup>27</sup>

In an extended comment on Psalm 132:12 ("If thy sons keep my covenant"), Calvin considers the state of affairs with respect to God's promise to David that "he would always have a descendant from his body upon the throne, not for one age merely, but forever." That kingdom in David's succession was for a time destroyed, but it was restored and had its "everlasting establishment in Christ." Here again the question about the conditional character of the promise had risen. Was the perpetuity of the covenant promise to David dependent upon the good conduct of men,

<sup>23</sup>*Inst.*, II.10.4.

<sup>24</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>25</sup>Comm. on Isaiah 42:6.

<sup>26</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>27</sup>Comm. on Luke 1:72.

'for the terms of this agreement would seem to suggest that God's covenant would not be made good, unless men faithfully performed their part.' Calvin reminds us that the covenant was perfectly gratuitous in the first place "so far as God's promise of sending a Saviour and Redeemer, because this stood connected with the original adoption of those to whom the promise was made, which was itself free." The nation's treachery and rebellion did not hinder God from sending his Son, "a public proof that he was not influenced by the consideration of their good conduct." The Jews, for their disobedience, were sent into exile. "God seemed at that time 'to make void or profane his covenant.'" The dispersion of the Jews was a breaking of the covenant, "but only in part and to appearance." As a matter of fact, the history of the Jews after David's time was filled with seeming evidences of the failure of the covenant, "And yet, as the Redeemer came forth from the very source predicted, it is plain that it stood firm and stable." The illustration concerning David is an emblem of the entire history of the Jews beginning with Abraham.

Since Jesus Christ is everywhere paramount in the interests of the covenant, whether it be considered in its Old or its New Testament dispensation, it will be of interest to inquire further into the nature of the unity of the covenant in Christ, and also into the way Christ participates in the covenant in order to secure its purposes. The covenant has its unitary character because it is, from beginning to end, a covenant in Christ. He is, in a very real sense, both its means and its end, for the covenant is *in him*. This emphasis protects the covenant from being regarded as a contract or compact between God and man in which Christ has merely an instrumental function. ". . . the fathers were partakers with us of the same inheritance, and hoped for the same salvation through the grace of our common Mediator."<sup>28</sup> ". . . the difference between us and the ancient fathers lies in accidents, not in substance. In all the leading characters of the Testament or Covenant we agree: the ceremonies and form of government, in which we differ, are mere additions. Besides, that period was the infancy of the church; but now that Christ is come, the church has arrived at the estate of manhood."<sup>29</sup> And again: "The covenant of all the fathers is so far from differing substantially from ours, that it is the very same; it only varies in the administration. . . . they both possessed and knew Christ as the Mediator, by whom they were united to God, and became partakers of his promises."<sup>30</sup> In line with his conviction that the covenant was a covenant in Christ, Calvin had no difficulty finding Christ everywhere in the Old Testament. Not only was he in the consciousness of Abraham: he was also bodied forth by the rites and ceremonies and laws of the Mosaic

<sup>28</sup>Inst., II.10.1.

<sup>29</sup>Comm. on Galatians 4:1.

<sup>30</sup>Inst., II.10.2.

economy, and his presence was typified in a multitude of other ways. Calvin regarded the promises made to the Israelites as being spiritual in substance.<sup>31</sup> They pointed to eternal life, not merely to earthly possessions in this life. They were understood by the fathers in this spiritual sense, and it was this that "inspired them with confident hopes of the life to come, towards which they aspired with all the powers of their souls."<sup>32</sup> God did give them terrestrial and carnal advantages, but this was merely for confirmation of the spiritual promises. "Thus, when he promised eternal blessedness to his servant Abraham, he added, in order to set a manifest token of his favour before his eyes, another promise respecting the possession of the land of Canaan."<sup>33</sup> The spiritual promises find their fulfilment, of course, in Christ, since eternal life is to be found only in him.

Since the promises made to the Israelites were spiritual in substance, ~~Calvin finds the difference between the Law and the Gospel to be one of degree rather than kind. At times he seemed to speak as if the difference were quite trivial, but in another place he could make it clear that there was, after all, a rather substantial difference between the two. In either case the covenant is one, and Law and Gospel represent different economies within the one covenant.~~ The prophet Jeremiah had indeed spoken, in his 31st chapter, of a *new* covenant, not according to the one he had made with their fathers, which covenant they broke. But, says Calvin, "God's covenant was, indeed, inviolable; for God did not promise to be the God of Abraham for a certain term of years; but the adoption, as Paul testifies, remains fixed and can never be changed. (Rom. xi, 29) Then on God's part it is eternal."<sup>34</sup> The old covenant was called "weak and evanescent" because the Jews had become covenant-breakers. The new covenant would not be different from the first one in essence, and as a matter of fact, the design of the new was "to give a perpetual sanction to the covenant, which he had made, from the beginning, with his own people."<sup>35</sup> When God indicated that He would write his law in their hearts and would remember their iniquities no more, He revealed that He would confirm and ratify the old covenant by the new.<sup>36</sup> So also with the expression, "He came to fulfil the Law." ". . . he actually fulfilled it, by quickening, with his Spirit, the dead letter, and then exhibiting, in reality, what had hitherto appeared only in figures."<sup>37</sup> We are never freed from the authority of the law; this is as unchangeable as the justice of God. As

<sup>31</sup>*Inst.*, IV.16.11; cf. *Inst.*, II.10.3,6; Comm. on Jeremiah 32:41; Comm. on Genesis 18:12.

<sup>32</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>33</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>34</sup>Comm. on Jeremiah 50:5; cf. also 31:31,32.

<sup>35</sup>Comm. on Matthew 5:17.

<sup>36</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>37</sup>*Loc. cit.*

far as rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic economy are concerned, only their use was abolished, "for their meaning was more fully confirmed."<sup>38</sup> Christ confirmed the validity of the ceremonies when he confirmed the truth shadowed forth by them.

God never made any other covenant than the one he made with Abraham and confirmed by the hand of Moses. The new aspect of the new covenant has reference to its form or manner.<sup>39</sup> This pertains not only to the words used, "but first Christ, then the grace of the Holy Spirit, and the whole external way of teaching."<sup>40</sup> The substance, or doctrine, remains the same. God brings forth in the Gospel "nothing but what the Law contains."<sup>41</sup> With regard to that substance, God has not changed a syllable from the beginning. "For he has included in the Law the rule of a perfect life, and has also shown what is the way of salvation, and by types and figures led the people to Christ, so that the remission of sin is there clearly made manifest, and whatever is necessary to be known."<sup>42</sup> The new covenant is not new, then, in an absolute sense, but in the sense that the old one is renewed.<sup>43</sup> Moses and Christ must not be separated, for by itself the law kills; joined to the Gospel, it makes alive. The doctrine of Moses contained the promises of free salvation, opening to the faithful the way of access to God. "But if Moses be set in opposition to Christ, he becomes the minister of death, and his doctrine leads to destruction; for the letter, as Paul in 2 Cor. iii. 6, calls it, killeth,—how so? Because whosoever is attached to Moses departs from Christ; and Christ alone possesses in himself the fulness of all blessings. It then follows, that nothing remains in Moses when considered in himself."<sup>44</sup> In the time of Moses, as well as in the new dispensation, God regenerated his elect children and illuminated them by his Spirit.

Moses was not set to abolish the covenant, for he served time and again to remind the people of the gracious covenant made by God with their fathers, and of which they were the heirs. Calvin illustrates this fact by pointing to the spiritual significance of the ceremonies, which he distinguishes carefully from the gruesome acts of animal sacrifice. "For what could be more vain or frivolous than for men to offer the fetid stench arising from the fat of cattle, in order to reconcile themselves to God? or to resort to any aspersion of water or of blood, to cleanse themselves from pollution? In short, the whole legal worship, if it be considered in it-

<sup>38</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>39</sup>Comm. on Jeremiah 31:31,32.

<sup>40</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>41</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>42</sup>Loc. cit.; cf. Preface to Comm. on Isaiah, p. xxvi.

<sup>43</sup>Comm. on Ezekiel 16:60.

<sup>44</sup>Comm. on Jeremiah 31:34.

self, and contain no shadows and figures of correspondent truths, will appear perfectly ridiculous."<sup>45</sup> It was the constant purpose of God to raise the minds of the people to something higher than the ceremonies themselves. He is delighted only with spiritual worship. Again and again the prophets chided the people for imagining there was anything of value in the mere sacrifices. The purpose of Israel's adoption was that they should become "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exod. xix. 6), and this could not be unless an atonement beyond that provided by the blood of beasts were offered. That far more excellent atonement was provided by Christ, and this was what was shadowed forth by animal sacrifices. The shadow being ever less than the reality, we may properly speak of the "weakness of the Law and the strength of the Gospel."<sup>46</sup> That God changed from the one to the other is no indication God is subject to change. He has merely "accommodated himself to the mutable and diversified capacities of man."<sup>47</sup> This is his right, and he is no more to be charged with folly than is the physician who deals differently with an elderly man than with a child. God has the "free and uncontrolled disposal of his gifts . . . "<sup>48</sup>

It may be well to stress Calvin's insistence on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the "old covenant" people, since this point is frequently misunderstood. In his commentary on Hebrews 8:10 he raises the question whether the people under the Law had a sure and certain promise of salvation, whether they had the gift of the Spirit, and whether they had the promise of the remission of sins. "Yes," he avers, "it is evident that they worshipped God with a sincere heart and a pure conscience, and that they walked in his commandments, and this could not have been the case except they had been inwardly taught by the Spirit; and it is also evident, that whenever they thought of their sins, they were raised up by the assurance of a gratuitous pardon." Referring to Jeremiah's prediction that God would write his law on their hearts, Calvin acknowledges that this appears to rob the people of the old covenant of their blessings. But he observes that Jeremiah does not expressly deny that God had written his law on the hearts of his people before the advent of the new covenant, and pardoned their sins. The comparison is between the less and the greater. "As then the Father hath put forth more fully the power of his Spirit under the Kingdom of Christ, and has poured forth more abundantly his mercy on mankind, this exuberance renders insignificant the small portion of grace which he had been pleased to bestow on the fathers. We also see that the promises were then obscure and intricate, so that they shone only

<sup>45</sup>*Inst.*, II.7.1.

<sup>46</sup>*Inst.*, II.11.10.

<sup>47</sup>*Inst.*, II.11.13.

<sup>48</sup>*Inst.*, II.11.14.

like the moon and stars in comparison with the clear light of the Gospel which shines brightly on us." In another place<sup>49</sup> he says: ". . . they had but a small taste, we have offered to us a more copious fruition of it. . . [We] have a clear manifestation of those mysteries, of which they had only an obscure prospect through the medium of shadows." Now, in the dispensation of the Gospel, "the graces of the Spirit [are] more liberally bestowed than they had previously been."<sup>50</sup>

The spiritual parallelism between the peoples of the old and new covenants, or of the one covenant, old and now renewed, is continued by Calvin in his rather extensive discussion of the sacraments. They may be said to be on the same sacramental basis. The Israelites are equal to us "in the signification of the sacraments."<sup>51</sup> His grace among them was illustrated by the same symbols. "They were baptized in their passage through the sea, and in the cloud by which they were protected from the fervour of the sun." The apostle Paul's argument here is designed "to prevent Christians from supposing that they excel the Jews in the privilege of baptism."<sup>52</sup> What follows from Paul is to the same effect: They "did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink," this being referred to Christ. For both the ancient Hebrew and the Christian sacraments are "testimonies of grace and salvation on the part of the Lord . . ."<sup>53</sup> Calvin approved Chrysostom's reference to sacraments as *compacts*, "by which God covenants with us, and we bind ourselves to purity and sanctity of life; because a mutual stipulation is made in them between God and us."<sup>54</sup> On his part God promises to remove all the guilt and punishment we have incurred through our sin, reconciling us to himself through Jesus Christ. On our part, sacraments are the badges of our profession, indicating that we have bound ourselves to him, to serve him in wholehearted devotion. ". . . such sacraments may justly be described as ceremonies by which God is pleased to exercise his people . . . to nourish, excite, and confirm faith in their hearts; and in the next place, to testify their religion before men."<sup>55</sup>

In a day when it is frequently asserted that faith that requires "props." or assistances of one kind or another, is not true faith, it may be well to consider Calvin's insistence that such helps are constantly needed by believers, and that God does not hesitate to supply them. These assistances are particularly obvious in the sacraments, where God designates some outward "token" or "sign," which is added to the verbal promise. In this

<sup>49</sup>*Inst.*, II.9.1.

<sup>50</sup>*Inst.*, II.11.14.

<sup>51</sup>*Inst.*, II.10.5.

<sup>52</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>53</sup>*Inst.*, IV.14.19.

<sup>54</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>55</sup>*Loc. cit.*

## *The Grounds on which the Covenant*

is exhibited "the wonderful kindness of God; who, for the purpose of confirming our faith in his word, does not disdain to use such helps."<sup>56</sup> For this reason it would be wrong for us to sever the sign from the word. The word of promise, related to the sacrament, is likewise a help to our faith. "By the word, I mean . . . that which may strengthen faith. . . . he then annexes a seal, for the sake of assurance. Wherefore, if the sacrament be wrested from the word, it ceases to be what it is called."<sup>57</sup> He further remarks in this place:

And not only is that administration of sacraments in which the word of God is silent, vain and ludicrous; but it draws with it pure satanic delusions. Hence we also infer, that from the beginning, it was the peculiar property of sacraments, to avail for the confirmation of faith. For certainly, in the covenant that promise is included to which faith ought to respond. It appears to some absurd, that faith should be sustained by such helps. But they who speak thus do not, in the first place, reflect on the great ignorance and imbecility of our minds; nor do they, secondly, ascribe to the working of the secret power of the Spirit that praise which is due. It is the work of God alone to begin and to perfect faith; but he does it by such instruments as he sees good; the free choice of which is in his own power.

Again, Calvin calls a sacrament a visible word, "a sculpture and image of that grace of God, which the word more fully illustrates."<sup>58</sup> The purpose of sacraments is "to help, promote and confirm faith."<sup>59</sup> So close are word and sign to one another in the intention of God, "that as soon as the sign itself meets our eyes, the word ought to sound in our ears. . . . Since the promise is the very soul of the sign, whenever it is torn away from the sign, nothing remains but a lifeless and vain phantom."<sup>60</sup> For this reason we may conclude that the papists had abolished the sacraments, "because, the voice of God having become extinct, nothing remains with them, except the residuum of mute figures."<sup>61</sup> When the word precedes, and the sign is embraced as a testimony and pledge of God's grace, only then is the covenant properly kept. On his part God binds himself to keep his promise toward us, and on our part the demand of faith and obedience is agreed to.<sup>62</sup> We are not able to develop fully here Calvin's belief that the sign is always a clear indication of the "real presence" of God with his people. "Where God gives a sign, there He comes Himself to be present with man. The sign is thus a veil behind which He conceals His presence on the scene of human affairs."<sup>63</sup> The reader is referred to the excellent summary treatment of this important matter in the very fine volume by

<sup>56</sup>Comm. on Genesis 9:12.

<sup>57</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>58</sup>Comm. on Genesis 17:9.

<sup>59</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>60</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>61</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>62</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>63</sup>Comm. on Acts 7:40.

R. S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of Word and Sacrament*, pp. 75-76. This is of special importance for the understanding of Calvin's views on the nature of the presence of the Lord's body in the sacrament of Communion.

The external sign for the confirmation of the covenant in pre-Christian times was, of course, the rite of circumcision, while under the new covenant it is baptism. "The covenant is common, the reason for confirming it is common. Only the mode of confirmation is different; for to them it was confirmed by circumcision, which among us has been succeeded by baptism."<sup>64</sup> Baptism and circumcision are both signs of forgiveness and mortification.<sup>65</sup> Commenting on the command recorded in Genesis 17:11, "Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin," Calvin says: "Very strange and unaccountable would this command at first sight appear. The subject treated of, is the sacred covenant, in which righteousness, salvation, and happiness are promised; whereby the seed of Abraham is distinguished from other nations, in order that it may be holy and blessed; and who can say that it is reasonable for the sign of so great a mystery to consist in circumcision?" Can there possibly be here an analogy between the sign and the thing signified? In reply Calvin avers that God appointed circumcision a sign for two reasons. By the first we may understand that whatever is born of man is polluted, and by the second we observe that salvation would proceed from the seed of Abraham. "In the first place, therefore, whatever men have peculiar to themselves, by generation, God has condemned, in the appointment of circumcision; in order that the corruption of nature being manifest, he might induce them to mortify their flesh." In this sense, therefore, circumcision is a sign of repentance. But the more positive signification of circumcision, that of the blessing promised in the seed of Abraham, is also marked and attested to.

Just as in circumcision the Jews had a pledge of their adoption as the people and family of God, they on their part professing their complete subjection to him, so in baptism we are initiated into the church of God, and profess our entire devotion to him.<sup>66</sup> Baptism, like circumcision, is a "contract of mutual obligation; for as the Lord by that symbol receives us into his household, and introduces us among his people, so we pledge our fidelity to him, that we will never afterwards have any other spiritual Lord. Hence as it is on God's part a covenant of grace that he contracts with us, in which he promises forgiveness of sins and a new life, so on our part it is an oath of spiritual warfare, in which we promise perpetual subjection to him."<sup>67</sup> And just as the children of Jews received a kind of

<sup>64</sup>Inst., IV.16.6; cf. Comm. on Genesis 17:13.

<sup>65</sup>Inst., IV.14.3.4; IV.16.10.

<sup>66</sup>Inst., IV.16.4.

<sup>67</sup>Comm. on I Corinthians 1:13.

Truly

sanctification by the position of their parents in the covenant, so the children of Christians derive the same sanctification from their parents.<sup>68</sup> When children in the old dispensation were circumcised, it made no matter that they did not understand the meaning of the sign. They were truly circumcised "into the mortification of their corrupt and polluted nature, which they were to pursue in mature years."<sup>69</sup> So infants in the new dispensation are baptized into a future repentance and faith. The seeds of repentance and faith are "implanted in their hearts by the secret operation of the Spirit."<sup>70</sup> Calvin argues that circumcision as a sign of regeneration was not given to any "but such as were already regenerated."<sup>71</sup> ". . . circumcision was a sign of their adoption from their mother's womb; and therefore, although they were not yet possessed of faith or understanding, God had a paternal power over them, because He had conferred upon them so great an honour."<sup>72</sup> Paul "represents the circumcision performed on infants as a testimony of the communion which they have with Christ."<sup>73</sup> God had promised that He would be merciful to their seed, even to a thousand generations (Exod. 20:6). "It ought to be admitted, therefore, beyond all controversy, that God is so kind and liberal to his servants, as, for their sakes, to appoint even the children who shall descend from them to be enrolled among his people."<sup>74</sup> The peculiar privilege of the children of believers flows from the blessing of the covenant, "by the intervention of which the curse of nature is removed; and those who were by nature unholy are consecrated to God by grace."<sup>75</sup> Paul in Romans calls the whole posterity of Abraham holy, 'because God had made a covenant of life with him.'<sup>76</sup> Thus natural propagation becomes the means of transmitting the spiritual privileges of the covenant. This should not be interpreted to mean that all Jewish children were elect children, or that all children of Christian parents are elected to eternal life. In an extented discussion of this matter in his commentary on Genesis 17:7 Calvin argues that in one sense all the Jews were called into the covenant blessing. But in a special sense, governed by God in the wisdom of his election, only some are true spiritual children of Abraham. So also under the new form of the covenant.

<sup>68</sup>Inst., IV.16.15.

<sup>69</sup>Inst., IV.16.20.

<sup>70</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>71</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>72</sup>Comm. on Deut. 29:10.

<sup>73</sup>Inst., IV.16.15.

<sup>74</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>75</sup>Comm. on I Corinthians 7:14.

<sup>76</sup>Loc. cit.

## CELEBRATING THE GENEVAN BIBLE

RICHARD C. OUDERSLUYS

This year marks the four hundredth anniversary of the Genevan New Testament, and 1960 will mark a similar anniversary for the Genevan Bible. It will be passing strange and most regrettable if these quadricentennial anniversary years 1957-60 do not inaugurate a series of studies which will record for our day something of the historical and literary significance of this great edition of the English Bible.

The inclusion in our Seminary library Bible Collection of a previously unreported and undescribed copy of the Genevan Bible provides both an occasion and a topic for the notes which follow and for beginning now the observance of this anniversary in our own Reformed Church circles.

### I

The place of the Genevan Bible in the history of English Protestantism is well known. It was the popular Bible of the English people from 1560 till well on in the 17th century, and its heavy publication and wide perusal contributed effectively to the spread of the Reformation doctrines. Its popularity may be conveniently measured by the number of its editions compared with those of other great Bibles published after 1560. Tyndale's New Testament went through 5 editions; the Great Bible, 7 magnificent folio editions; the Bishops' Bible, 22 editions; the New Testament of the Bishops' Bible, 14 editions; or a total of 48 editions for these Bibles. On the other hand, the Genevan Bible and New Testament went through approximately 180 editions. Its literary influence upon subsequent versions of the English Bible has been acknowledged on every hand. All but one of the 122 texts of Cromwell's *Soldiers' Pocket Bible* (1643) were taken from the Genevan Bible.<sup>1</sup> Its influence upon the translators of the King James Version (1611) is well known,<sup>2</sup> and through this latter "authorized" version the phrasing and vocabulary of the unauthorized Genevan Bible continued through the centuries.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>H. R. Willoughby, *Soldiers' Bibles Through Three Centuries*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944). In addition to a definitive treatment of war bibles, this work contains a beautiful facsimile of Cromwell's Soldier's Bible.

<sup>2</sup>C. C. Butterworth, *The Literary Lineage of the King James Bible*, (Philadelphia: The University Press, 1941).

<sup>3</sup>While there are three early Bibles known as "authorized" Bibles, the Great Bible (1539-41), the Bishops' Bible (1568), and the King James Bible (1611), strangely enough, there is on record no official action or sanction for the latter, although it has come to be regarded as the authorized Bible.

The persecutions of Mary Tudor who came to the throne in 1553 set the stage for the eventual publication of this popular Protestant Bible. While some three hundred reformers suffered martyrdom, notably Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer, others like Coverdale and Whittingham fled to Geneva. There with the help of Calvin and Beza, they employed themselves in producing a new revision of the Bible. The New Testament appeared in 1557 with an introduction by Calvin, but the work is usually credited to Calvin's brother-in-law, William Whittingham. It was based on Tyndale's 1534 edition with revisions drawn mainly from Beza's Latin text and commentary of 1556. Beza, it will be recalled, settled in Geneva in 1558 and became president of Calvin's college and succeeded Calvin as head of the Genevan church in 1564. Since the English reformers had no printing establishment of their own, the book was printed in Geneva by Conrad Badius, a convert and friend of Calvin. It was immediately popular and for good reasons. It was printed in clear Roman type and in convenient duodecimo size, and for the first time in English, the verses were divided and numbered consecutively. This versioning was probably that of Robert Estienne's 1551 edition of the Greek Testament via Beza's Latin text of 1556. The New Testament was followed shortly by the publication of the whole Bible in 1560. The work subsequently became known as the *Breeches Bible* because of its rendering of Genesis 3:7: "They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves breeches." Other features of this Bible, however, are equally interesting although not as well known, as for example, the use of the word "cratch" for "manger" in the infancy narrative of Luke (2:7,12,16). While the product of the combined efforts of several scholars, the book was in the main the work of William Whittingham, Anthony Gilby, and Thomas Sampson. The cost of the publication was borne by the congregation at Geneva, and among the prominent contributors was John Bodley, who afterward received from Queen Elizabeth the sole patent to print the work, although seemingly he never made use of the privilege. Many improvements in the Genevan New Testament of 1557 were made when it was incorporated in the complete Bible of 1560. The Old Testament was based on an extensive and independent revision of the Great Bible (1539) by the aid of the Hebrew text, the Latin versions of Pagninus (1528), Münster (1534-35), Juda (1543), and the French version of Olivetan. Dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, the preface of the Bible is dated April 10, 1560, more than a year after Elizabeth's Coronation. The Preface outlined in detail the aims and methods of the translators, and summarized beautifully the Protestant view of the practical importance of the Bible. The following description is characteristic of the Genevan appreciation of the Word of God:

"It is the light to our paths, the keye of the kingdome of heauen, our comfort in affliction, our shidle and sworde against Satan, the schoole of all wisdome, the glasse wherein we beholde God's face, the testimonie of his fauor, and the only foode and nourishment of our soules."

The title-page carries the following information:

"The Bible and Holy Scriptures conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament. Translated according to the Ebrue and Greke, and conferred with the best translations vpon all the hard places, and other things of great importance as may appear in the Epistle to the Reader. At Geneva. Printed by Rouland Hall. M.D.L.X."

It was issued in the convenient quarto size, which made it a handy book for daily use. Most of the previous English Bibles had been in the large and heavy folio size. It was the most accurate and scholarly English Bible produced before the King James Bible. The Old Testament in particular was a high accomplishment in faithful translation. The Hebrew scholarship of the translators was of high calibre, and there is strong evidence that they were the first of the English translators to make considerable use of the Hebrew commentaries of David Kimchi.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the most popular feature of the work for Protestants generally was its system of extensive marginal annotation, together with numerous additional "helps" such as maps, tables, running titles, chapter summaries, and after 1579, a Calvinistic catechism. The strong Calvinistic and Puritan bias of the work did not make it popular with the more moderately inclined royalty and clergy, and its use in the churches of England was forbidden. Archbishop Parker was especially dissatisfied with the book and succeeded in getting the Queen to order the official use of the Great Bible in order to challenge the obvious popularity of the Genevan Bible. Parker also set in motion the production of a new work, and in 1568 the volume known as the Bishops' Bible was ready for publication.

A major development in the history of the Genevan Bible took place in 1576 when Lawrence Tomson brought out his edition of the New Testament.<sup>5</sup> The text varied somewhat from that of the Genevan Bible, and the notes were taken mainly from Beza's Greek and Latin New Testament. In 1587 a quarto edition of the Genevan Bible was issued in which Tomson's New Testament text and notes were substituted. Some preferred the 1560 version, and as a result two series of Genevan Bibles came into circulation, the one with the New Testament of the 1560

<sup>4</sup>D. Daiches, *The King James Version of the English Bible*, (Chicago: University Press, 1941), pp. 51-54.

<sup>5</sup>Lawrence Tomson (1539-1608) was a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and a distinguished scholar who used twelve languages, and wrote several theological works, the principal one being his New Testament. He was employed by Sir Francis Walsingham." See Charles Eason, *The Genevan Bible: Notes on its Production and Distribution*, (Dublin: Eason & Son, 1937), p. 5.

Bible, the other with Tomson's New Testament. Tomson's edition underwent one more significant change. At the end of his New Testament in the Bibles of 1595, 1598 and 1601, he inserted the Notes on Revelation by Franciscus Junius. In a 1590 edition of the Latin Bible, Junius had added copious notes on the book of Revelation. According to Charles Eason, these notes were translated by Tomson and printed separately in a little brochure of twenty-two pages.<sup>6</sup> These notes were violently anti-papal and did much to foster the resistance of the English reformers against all compromise with the Roman church. A few citations will illustrate their anti-papal character. At Revelation 9:5 we read, "And to them was commanded that they should not kill them, but that they should bee vexed fwe moneths, and that their paine should be as the paine that commeth of a scorpion, when he hath stung a man." The marginal notation reads in part:

Now this space is to bee accounted from the end of that thousand yeares mentioned, Chap. 20:3 and that is from the Popedom of that Gregory the seventh, a most monstrous Necromancer, who before was called Hildebrandus Senesis: for this man being made altogether of impiety and wickednesse, as a slave of the devil, whom he served, was the most wicked firebrand of the world: he excommunicated the Emperor Henry the fourth; went about by all manner of trecherie to set vp and put downe empires and kingdomes as he liked himselfe: and doubted not to set Rodolph the Swedon ouer the Empire in stead of Henry before named, sending vnto him a Crowne with this verse annexed vnto it, *Petra dedit Petro, Petrus diadema Rodolpho*: that is, The Rocke to Peter gaue the crowne, and Peter Rodolph doth renowne. Finally, he so finely bestirred himselfe in his affaires, as he miserably set all Christendome on fire, and conueyed ouer vnto his successors the burning brand of the same: who enraged with like ambition, never ceased to nourish that flame, and to enkindle it more and more: whereby Cities, Common-weales, and whole kingdomes set together by the eares amongst themselves by most expert cutthroats, came to ruine, whiles they miserably wounded one another. This terme of an hundred and fiftie years, taketh end in the time of Gregory the ninth, or *Hugelinus Anagniensis* (as he was before called) who caused to be compiled by one Raimond his chapleine and confessour, the body of Decretals, and by sufferance of the Kings and Princes to be published in the Christian world, and established for a law. For by this sleight at length the Popes arrogated vnto themselves license to kill whome they would, while others were unawares: and without feare established a butchery out of many of the wicked Canons of the Decretals, which the trumpet of the fift Angel had expressly forbidden, and had hindered vntill this time.

At Revelation 17:3, 4 we read in part: "I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast . . . and the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet." The marginal annotation for these verses runs as follows:

A skarlet colour, that is, with red and purple garment: and surely it was not

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 27. These Notes must be distinguished from the larger Commentary on Revelation in Latin by Junius which was translated into English in 1594, a book of 286 pages.

without cause that the Romish clergie were so much delighted with this colour. That harlot, the spiritual Babylon, which is Rome. She is described by her attire, profession and deeds.

The mention of the "three days" in Revelation 11:11 is annotated thus: "That is, what time God shall destroy that wicked Boniface." The "second beast" mentioned in Revelation 13:11 receives this marginal explanation:

The second member of the vision, concerning the ecclesiastical dominion, which in Rome succeeded that which was politiche, and is the power of the corporation of false Prophets, and of the forgers of false doctrine.

Anti-papal utterances of this character are not limited to Junius' Notes on Revelation. The Tomson New Testament in general was much more controversial in its marginal comments than either the Genevan New Testament or the Genevan Bible of 1560. This was due to the fact that Tomson's guiding spirit was Beza rather than Calvin. An example of the Tomson type of polemic may be found at I Timothy 4:12 where the biblical text reads: "Let no man despise thy youth, but be vnto them that beleue, an ensample in worde, in conuersation, in loue, in spirit, in faith, and in purenesse." The margin then provides this helpful comment:

Now hee returneth to that exhortation, shewing which are the vertues of a Pastour, whereby hee may come to be reuerenced, althouge hee be but young, to wit, such speech and life as are witnesses of charitie, zeale, faith and purtie, but here is no mention made of the crosier staffe, ring, cloake, and such other foolish and childish toys.

Another example may be found in I Timothy 6:4 where the phrase "strife of wordes" receives this pithy comment:

Striuings about words, not about matter: and by words he meaneth all those things which have no pith in them, whereby we can reap no profit. Such as we see in those shamelesse schooles of Poperie, which are nothing else but vaine babbling and prating.

A reference should also be made, if only in passing, to a peculiarity of Tomson's translating technique. In his eagerness to do justice to the force of the Greek definite article, he constantly rendered it by "that" or "this" and in many instances this practice led to some rather ludicrous results, as for example at 1 John 5:12 which reads: "He that hath *that* Son hath *that* life: and he that hath not *that* Son of God hath not *that* life." This was in imitation of Beza's translating procedure.<sup>7</sup>

The Tomson New Testament together with Junius' Notes form an important chapter in the history of the Genevan Bible because they were a regular feature of numerous editions printed in Amsterdam up to 1644.

<sup>7</sup>B. F. Westcott, *A General View of the History of the English Bible*, (London: Macmillan, 1905), p. 223, n.l.

These editions were imported into England with a title page bearing the date 1599, although printed much later. In many of these editions the Apocrypha was omitted in accordance with the decision of the Synod of Dordt in 1618. According to Charles Eason, there were at least twelve of these misdated editions, all bearing the 1599 date and containing the Tomson New Testament and the Notes of Junius.<sup>8</sup>

## II

The copy of the Genevan Bible in our Seminary Library Collection belongs to the second series described above, a misdated edition containing the Tomson New Testament and the Notes of Junius. It is substantially bound in leather with a simple hand-tooled design on the covers. The first of the initial pages is a full page title-woodcut. Structurally it is of the border variety composed of twenty-four square blocks: twelve bearing symbols of the twelve tribes of Israel and twelve bearing conventional representations of the twelve apostles. This border is decorative rather than pictorial, and surrounds an inner panel of letterpress. At the corners of the inner panel are four medallions of the four evangelists. The upper medallions of Matthew and Mark are separated by two simple representations of the dove and the burning lamp. The two lower medallions of Luke and John are separated by a small Agnus Dei with a bannered Cross. The letterpress reproduces the main content of the title-page which follows.

On the lower half of the title-page is a small woodblock representing the Crossing of the Red Sea. Above it is the text of Exodus 14:13 and below it the text of Exodus 14:14, and on the verticals run the lines of Psalm 34:19. The title-page gives the following information:

The Bible, that is, the Holy Scriptures conteined in the Olde and Newe Testament, translated according to the Ebewe and Greeke, and conferred with the best translations in diuers languages. With most profitable Annotations vpon all the hard places, and other things of great importance. Imprinted at London by the Deputies of Christopher Barker, Printer to the Queenes most excellent Maiestie. 1599. Cum priuilegio.

In the sequence of the initial pages there appears next the Preface which is entitled "To the Christian Reader." By using small 7-point type the Preface was successfully compressed to a single page, but such compressed, small type could hardly have encouraged the reading of the document.<sup>9</sup> On the back of the Preface is a rhymed tribute to the

<sup>8</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 5. "These misdated editions—over 12 or more—were closely compared by Lea Wilson in the Catalogue of the Bibles in his collection, and his conclusions are accepted by the Editors of the British & Foreign Bible Society's Historical Catalogue."

<sup>9</sup>A more readable reproduction of the Preface may be consulted in A. W. Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), pp. 279-283.

Scripture entitled "Of the incomparable treasure of the Holy Scriptures, with a prayer for the true vse of the same." The verso of this page carries the Table of Contents in three divisions. "The booke called Apocripha" are listed here but form no part of the biblical text.

The book reveals many of the regular features found in all editions of the Genevan Bible such as decorative initials at the beginning of each book, the heavy initial at the beginning of every chapter of every book, numerous maps and woodcuts which illustrate the accompanying text, the extensive "Argument" or summary of content which is prefixed to each book, and the usual Calvinistic annotations.

The New Testament section presents two initial pages, the first of which reproduces the woodcut used at the head of the Bible. Since no separate title-page is allotted to this edition, the reader must have recourse to the center panel of the woodcut for his title-page information which is as follows:

The New Testament of our Lord Iesvs Christ, Translated out of the Greeke by Theod. Beza: With briefe Summaries and expositions vpon the hard places by the said Authour, Ioac. Camer. and P. Loseler Villerius. Englished by L. Tomson. Together with the Annotations of Fr. Junius vpon the Reuelation of S. Iohn. Imprinted at London by the Deputies of Christopher Barker, Printer to the Queenes most Excellent Maiestie. 1599.

The additional initial page furnishes on the recto the prefatory address "The Printer to the diligent Reader," and on the verso a large map of Palestine entitled:

The description of the holy Land conteining the places mentioned in the four Euangelists, with other places about the sea coasts, wherein may be seene the wayes and iourneyes of Christ and his Apostles to Iudea, Samaria, and Galile: for into these parts this land is divided.

Below the map is a list of 32 places with guides for their identification and location. The list carries this heading:

The places specified in the Mappe, with their situation by observation of the degrees concerning their length and breadth.

As a preface to Junius' Notes on Revelation there is printed on the back of the Epistle of Jude the familiar chronological table of events used by the author in his interpretation. It is entitled "The Order of Time wherevnto the Contents of this booke are to be referred." Typical of the remarks in this Table is that for the year of Christ 1217, which reads as follows:

The Dragon vexeth the world 150 yeeres vnto Gregory the ix, who writh the Decretals and most cruelly persecuted the Emperour Frederick the second. The dragon by both the beasts persecuteth the Church, and putteth the godly to death, chap. 9.

Following the Book of Revelation are found in regular order the two Tables customary in Genevan Bibles. The first contains the "Inter-

pretation of the proper names" and the second, a concordance. The final distinguishing feature of this edition is "The CL Psalms of David in Scots Meter, after the forme that they are used to bee sung in the Kirke of Scotland." On the decorative page standing at the head of this rhymed psalter is this publishing notice: "Edinburgh, Printed by the Heires of Andro Hart, Anno Dom. 1632." Following the psalter collection is a Table of the Psalms according to their beginning lines. The final page carries "A Forme of Prayers to be vsed in priuate Houses," and three rather lengthy prayers are printed in the small 7-point type.

The inclusion of the 1632 Psalter published by the "heiress of Andro Hart" poses something of a problem in establishing the publishing locale of our Bible. We know that Hart printed Genevan Bibles with the Thomson New Testament in Edinburgh (folio, 1610), and also had them printed at Dordt (1601). His partners and successors also continued other and subsequent editions.<sup>10</sup> It seems unlikely, however, that our copy represents one of these Hart editions. Our copy bears striking similarities to the No. 7 Bible in the collection of Mr. Francis Frye, which in turn is identical with that issued by F. Stam for Thomas Crawfoorth at Amsterdam in 1633, with the exception of the two titles to the Old and New Testaments. A number of considerations bear out the judgment that our Bible was one of those published at Amsterdam in 1633 or a few years later. For one thing, folio 84 in the book of Joshua contains the familiar map of Palestine with a number of Dutch misspellings, among which is "the Mediterane Zed" for "Mediterranean Sea." In fact, folio 84 is full of misprints of names. The constant confusion of the letters (d), (t), and (th), also points to a Dutch origin. The spellings of *host*, *abode*, *dance*, and *move* are essentially Dutch. Whereas in English editions these words are mostly without a diphthong, in the Dutch editions they are almost invariably spelled as *hoaste*, *aboade*, *daunce*, and *moove*. The printing of the italic word *was as vvas* in Joshua 14:15 is another tell-tale sign of the Dutch origin of our Bible. This characteristic of the Dutch editions was apparently due to the absence of the letter *w* from their italic alphabet.<sup>11</sup> These editions also generally contained the psalter for purposes of congregational singing, and were evidently printed to match the edition they are bound up with. While these Dutch editions were intended for the use of English Puritans of the Low Countries, many of them found their way into England, and notably, Scotland. It would appear then, that our copy of the Genevan Bible can hardly be earlier than 1633.

One consideration yet to be mentioned may affect our estimate of the history of our copy. Careful examination shows that the upper margins

<sup>10</sup>John Eadie, *The English Bible*, (London: Macmillan, 1876), Vol. II, p. 49.

<sup>11</sup>Nicholas Pocock, "Some Notices of the Genevan Bible," *The Bibliographer*, London: Elliot Stock, (1882-24), vol. 4, p. 29.

have been severely trimmed at some time or other. In fact, they are so severely trimmed that the running headings and chapter numbers are almost excised and not a few are badly mutilated. This may indicate that the psalter section was added later to one of the Dutch editions, the whole being retrimmed and rebound. Until further judgment is obtained, we shall venture the tentative judgment that our Genevan Bible is probably thirty to forty years later than its indicated date, that it was published in Amsterdam, and that it had a Scottish circulation and use.

## THE CREEDS IN TIME AND SPACE

EUGENE HEIDEMAN

The Christian denomination which takes its written confessions seriously is one which will also be deeply concerned to advance the whole ecumenical movement. The love for the creeds which have come down from the fathers will not and cannot set itself in opposition to the desire of the churches to come together as one in Jesus Christ. The creeds were born in the desire to bring men together in the one Christian church and to oppose all that which was not Christian and favorable to that unity.

Because the Reformed Church in America has continued to love the creeds which have come down through the ages, she has correctly seen it to be her duty and privilege to become active in the Presbyterian Alliance, the National Council of Churches, and the World Council of Churches. Individual congregations have felt further obliged to co-operate with other ecumenical bodies such as the National Association of Evangelicals or to work together with such institutions as the Moody Bible Institute. Insofar as the Reformed Church as a whole is prompted by her conviction of the truth of the confession of the fathers, this movement towards cooperation is a most laudable activity and surely consistent with her basic biblical principles.

Since, however, there has sometimes been some inclination to view the desire to maintain the confessions of the fathers as one which is in opposition to the ecumenical movements, it is well to examine more carefully the thesis set forth above in which it is maintained that the Christian who loves his confessions will be greatly interested in the ecumenical movement, and, conversely, the one who is truly ecumenical will also be vitally concerned with the confessions of the fathers. In this investigation one can begin by setting forth the place and function of the creeds in the church.

### I.

Basically, it is the whole church which confesses. It is neither an individual church member nor an individual minister or elder who is the subject that confesses. One may not even say that it is a local church which in the proper administration of the Word and sacraments confesses. Rather, it is the Christ-confessing church which God has placed in the world which is the subject that confesses. From the Biblical point of

view, the church in its presbyterian order is as much universal church as it is local church and vice versa.

This confessing on the part of the church is not an abstract and timeless statement of the eternal truth. It is rather the *proper* speaking and acting, living and working in the world. Confessing is not an end in itself, but it is done in order that the lines of the salvation and justice of the Lord may be made known. Confessing, living and working are not three activities of the church which stand next to each other. The element of confessing, and thus of the creeds, may not be isolated from the rest of the activity of the church.

One can say that the creeds do not have so much a place as that they have a function in the whole being of the church. In the creeds, the church first of all lays before the world a declaration about the what, how, and why of her activity. Secondly, she reminds herself in her creeds that her social work in the world is to be understood only out of the Kingdom of God and is not a worldly "activism." Finally, she also has in her creeds the indispensable directives for all her work in its whole and in all of its parts.<sup>1</sup> Purpose

The church has come to the point of confession and of writing creeds only after she has been led by the Spirit to an encounter with the Bible. The creeds have their basis and authority in the Word of God. No one and nothing else can add any authority to the creeds. The creeds are not a new source of revelation, but always stand under Scripture. The creeds of the church are a commentary on the Scripture in the words and speech of a certain time.

By virtue of the fact that creeds are always based on Scripture, the setting forth of a creed or confession always involves the whole church. One section of the church can never confess for itself alone. Just as the Bible speaks to the whole church, so the confession or creed must by necessity speak for the one, holy, catholic church. When one speaks out what he believes to be the truth of God, his statement, if it really is his creed, is of significance for the whole church. The writing of a creed involves the certainty that one has received the truth from God.

It is precisely at this point that the church of former centuries understood so well the significance of her confessions. She realized the necessity of adding to the end of her confessions a series of anathemas upon all those who held contrary opinions. She was confident that her creed spoke the truth of God, and all who opposed God's truth were to be damned. If the church is to speak, then she must stand ready to speak

<sup>1</sup>A. A. van Ruler. *De Belijdende Kerk in de Nieuwe Kerkorde*. G. F. Callenbach, 1948, p. 22.

for the whole church. If she is not ready to speak out in the name of the whole church, and if she is not ready to condemn all contrary opinions, she is not yet ready to write her creeds.

*X* The function of creeds therefore places the church in grave danger. There is always the possibility that the creed is in error. It has happened more than once that men have spoken in the name of Christ what in reality were the words of Satan. When one makes that error, one becomes not church, but anti-Christ! There is also the possibility that one does not fully believe his own confession, in which case one stands under the anathemas which he has pronounced himself. It is well for those who speak in terms of writing new creeds to first consider the dangers involved in such activity.

*✓* In the light of the dangers involved in the writing of creeds, it is not surprising that confessions and creeds have come almost exclusively out of times of grave crisis, when men were no longer able to escape writing creeds and confessions. Only when the church found itself with its back to the wall in the battle with Arianism did it write the Nicene Creed. In the sixteenth century, when all types of teachings and heresies were being heard, a prince ordered that the Heidleberg Catechism be written. When the Roman Catholic stood ready to massacre the Protestants in the Low Countries, Guido de Bres wrote the Belgic Confession in the desperate hope that the Spanish would be converted. The Hervormde Kerk in The Netherlands at the beginning of the seventeenth century felt the power of the Remonstrant rationalists and were forced to write the immortal Canons of Dort. These men knew the dangers involved in the writing of these creeds, but found themselves forced to write in the name of the one holy catholic church against those who threatened to destroy it.

*✓* The origin of the creeds is clear evidence of the fact that creeds have an historical, political, and even national character. Creeds are written at a definite point in history and bear clear evidence of that time. The Nicene Creed as well as that of Chalcedon were written in terms of their day. They use the Greek language, with all of its philosophical overtones. The political controversies of the day also left their marks on the decisions of the councils. These creeds cannot possibly be viewed as exclusively theological documents. In the days of the writing of the creeds, men had not yet progressed to that high state of culture and knowledge where it becomes possible to separate the church and state into clearly distinct compartments.

Finally, once creeds are written, they cannot be forgotten or dismissed. In the creeds, the fathers have confessed what they believed to be the message of the Word of God. They spoke for the whole church, not only

in the world of their day, but also for the church of all time. The church is one in both space and time. The Spirit has been active through the ages, bringing men to confession of their Lord. One cannot neglect the creeds without denying the work of the Spirit in the past. His work remains of power today. The words of the fathers must be constantly re-examined in the light of the Word of God.

The relationship between the authority of the Bible and that of the confessions of the fathers can never be a logical one. On the one hand, the creeds always stand under the authority of the Word, and can never be placed next to it. The creeds always stand open to the criticism of the Word and must bow to it. On the other hand, the content of the creeds is the same as that of the Word in that they are the true interpretation of the Word. The presbyterian system has a place not only for the living Word of God, but also for the man who hears that Word. The presbyterian system, with its doctrine of the Spirit, is here also more true, but less logical than that more "Christological" thought of Rome, where the bishops or Pope can give infallible interpretations of Scripture.

## II.

The fact that the writing and maintaining of a creed involves one in the responsibility of speaking for and to the whole church is a clear indication that the Reformed Church has been consistent with her confessions when she lives in and with the ecumenical bodies in the world. Under no circumstances may the Reformed Church ever allow herself to believe or to be told that the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Belgic Confession together with the Canons of Dort are only for members of the Reformed Church or for people of Dutch nationality and extraction. If these three creeds are true for anyone, they are true for the whole church. The confessions are to be proclaimed to all members of the Reformed Church and also to other denominations.

The Reformed Church, insofar as she believes her creeds, longs to give them full publicity and to discuss them with others. With regard to other denominations, this discussion takes on the aspect of ecumenical activity. The various churches come together, each certain that its own creed is the best and truest confession of the message of the Gospel. Each church enters the ecumenical discussion feeling to at least a certain extent that she has a "mission" to carry out with regard to the other churches. Each comes with a willingness to allow the others to examine its confession, for it is certain that through that examination and comparison the other will gain deeper insights into the Christian faith. Out of this discussion and mutual examination, each is surprised and also

thankful to learn that now and then the other has insights which prove helpful to the understanding of one's own confession.

The ecumenical discussion of the churches makes prominent the "open" character of the creeds. Each denomination enters the discussion more or less certain of her own confession as that which most completely and most clearly sets forth the witness of Scripture. Its own creed expresses and protects most fully the mystery of the revelation. Yet in the discussion, the creeds are permanently open to criticism. He who can say it better may say it better. Ecumenical discussion protects the church from a "creedalism" which destroys the creeds themselves. The church which bends all of its efforts to protect its creeds may discover that while preserving the form it has lost the content. A creed is not to be zealously guarded in the safe of the church, but it is to be placed on the billboards along the highway where, although vulnerable to being defaced, they nevertheless proclaim their message to the world.

Because the creeds have a function as well as a place in the whole being of the church, ecumenical discussion of the creeds necessarily takes place on a broad front. The whole congregation in all of its activity enters into the conversation. The boy in Sunday School asking who made God, the young man troubled about the social message of the church, the older man who is concerned about the younger generation, and the theologian writing about election, all make their contributions. The mission boards, educational agencies, committees on justice and good will, publicity committees and scholars speak in turn. Not only faith and order, but also life and work conferences make statements. The whole church is active in the discussion of the creeds.

If this broad discussion is to take place, then it becomes essential that the creeds be placed in the open where they can be seen and studied by everyone. One of the great dangers in denominations which require that ministers sign a formula stating their agreement with the creeds is that men will begin to believe that the confessional statements are intended for the ministers alone. They tend to be viewed as intellectual statements which insure the orthodoxy of the ministry. Thus it comes about that one begins to hear statements that certain doctrines, such as predestination, are to be believed but not preached. No greater damage can be done to the creeds than to refuse to preach any part of them. The three symbols of the Reformed Church in America form one corporate whole. One cannot neglect any point without damaging the whole witness. Here one sees the wisdom of our fathers who insisted that the *entire* Catechism be preached. If one were to make any complaint against the fathers, then it would be that although they made provision for the regular teaching and

preaching of the Catechism, they did not adequately state the role of the Belgic Confession with the Canons of Dort. It is precisely in the latter documents that the doctrine of the church and the doctrine of predestination, election and reprobation. (The forming of which, incidentally, can be considered the high point of the Reformation.) are set forth. One should not glory in the fact that the Catechism does not say very much about election; it is better to see the Catechism as standing in close relationship to the other two documents. If the Reformed Church is to become ecumenical in the deepest sense of the word, then her creeds must be placed before all of her members where they can be studied and acted upon. These confessions are not for ministers alone, but they are for and of the whole church.

It may happen now and then that the ecumenical discussion will be interrupted by a person or church with an answer to the whole problem. At first the assembly may be pleased, then become puzzled, and finally disagree completely. At such moments when an Arius, a Nestorius, or a Servetus sets forth his well-reasoned explanation, ecumenical discussion is temporarily stopped until the heretic is driven from the assembly. Ecumenical discussion can be held only by members of the Christian church. Heretics always bring a divisive element into the assembly. The various answers of the churches all remain possibilities in the discussion but the rationalistic views of the heretic cannot possibly be right and must be immediately rejected for otherwise the whole ecumenical discussion will come to an end.

There are only two possibilities for any Christian denomination, and especially for that denomination which respects its creeds. Either one must enter into the ecumenical discussion with the other denominations or he must be ready to declare the other a heretic. To take the middle way, the way of allowing each denomination to live with its own beliefs and creeds is to deny the truth or at best the relevance of one's own confession. If the three confessions of the Reformed Church are true and relevant, then it is absolutely necessary that she enter into discussion with all other Christians. Labels must not be allowed into the decision to discuss. "Liberals," "Conservative," "Fundamentalist," must be approached ecumenically unless we are ready to pronounce the other a heretic.

The Christian who takes his confession seriously will never criticize anyone for being too ecumenically minded. There have been times when the Reformed Church has hesitated with regard to ecumenical discussion. Let it never be said, however, that she hesitated because she is afraid to enter into the conversation. She may hesitate only when the discussion is not ecumenical enough. When we discuss, we must be free to discuss

everything. The unity of the church in all of her aspects must be made known to faith.

It is precisely at this point that criticism of American ecumenical activity can be made. The greatest difficulty at present in our North American circles is that men are afraid to be thoroughly ecumenical. Churches are ready to work together in the area of life and work, but they are all too often afraid to be ecumenical in the matter of faith and order. One must be careful at this point that he does not become self-satisfied in his own desire to think more deeply into theological or ethical matters than do others. It is all too tempting for the local pastor to desire to protect his flock from the viewpoints of pastors of other denominations and the thoughts of other congregations. Ecumenical discussion of faith and order, if it is to be worth anything, must also be carried out at the local level among members of various congregations and denominations. The belief that one has been led by the Spirit of God to confess by the words of the three formulas should cause us to desire to discuss also at the local level these matters with others. It is the duty of the Reformed Church, just because she is so certain that Truth is One and that her creeds are true, to insist on the most complete ecumenical activity at every level.

It is also well to note, however, that to a certain extent the three formulas are not completely suited to the American scene. The thought patterns of these documents are Dutch and German, not Anglo-Saxon or American. No American can understand them, therefore, as fully as will a Dutchman or German. We live in a different political and cultural situation. What is true of the Reformed Church in America can also be said for almost every other American denomination. The truly American confession is yet to be written, just as the development of an American theology is still in its infant stages. Yet someday the Gospel must also become fully incarnate in American flesh as it has become so in Europe, and as it must also do in Japan, China, and in the rest of the world. We may be thankful for the ecumenical discussions held at Evanston in 1954, but this must not blind Americans to the necessity for continued discussion in the National Council of Churches and other American bodies. European culture is not American culture; European theology is not American theology. Americans must also learn to discuss by themselves. They must learn to know their own unity in Christ in order that they may come to understand the world wide unity in our Savior.

Someday God may give an American confession to the Church. We cannot force him to give it, we only hope and pray. We must not become

impatient and hastily begin writing our own creeds. On the contrary, in light of the history of the writing of such creeds and the circumstances under which they were written, perhaps we are more inclined to hope such creeds need never be written, or at least not be written in our time. Meanwhile, it should not even be suggested that the present creeds of the American churches are to be lightly regarded because they belong to another culture. On the contrary, those creeds, because they are true and relevant, will never lose their power. When the Heidelberg Catechism was written and published in Germany and Holland, the Apostle's Creed was not rejected because of its Greek origin. On the contrary, it was taken up and incorporated into the Catechism. We can expect something similar to happen with present European creeds in the American situation. The past is not forgotten. Whenever the confessions are taken seriously, they hold Christians in that unity with all Christians of all times and places. In unity with the confessions of the Fathers, Christ is confessed in the whole world today.

## THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES

WILLIAM VANDER LUGT

If the literature that is coming from the press is an indication of the interest in the subject we can take courage. The publication of E. Harris Harbison's "The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation" is a magnificent contribution to discussion on this problem, possibly the most significant since Moberly's "The Crisis in the University." A few years ago a group of scholars from various universities and colleges who recognize the need for expressing the Faith in terms of our culture organized under the name of Faculty Christian Fellowship. Their most recent attempts are set forth in their bulletin reviewing the work that has been done in the fields of sociology and history. The general theme is "Christianity and the Intellectual Disciplines." Meetings have been held in Chicago, Illinois; St. Louis, Missouri; Portales, New Mexico; Tahlequah, Oklahoma; Boone, Iowa; and other places. The March issue of the "Christian Scholar" is devoted to a discussion of the subject, "History, Historians, and the Christian Perspective."

It is encouraging to note the interest in this important, but long neglected issue. Christian thought has too often occupied itself with the failures of the contemporary mind rather than with its contributions. It has concentrated upon the confusion and frustration of contemporary civilization without trying to remold and transform secular thought in terms of the Faith. Faith must, to be sure, seek to understand itself, but it must go on from this point to understand everything else by interpreting reality in terms of its own vision and from its own standpoint. The Church, however, has been rather critical of the cultural dilemma and has had a tendency to withdraw from the scene rather than attempt a synthesis between faith and culture. Humanists, both classical and scientific, have endeavored to correct the confusion. Educationalists and religious leaders alike have diagnosed and deplored the disintegration of education and culture into a chaos of unrelated specialisms. The Christian faith, however, has been very critical of these attempts, and has deemed the job of integrating culture into the Faith too immense to undertake, or otherwise impossible of solution, or not urgent enough to be considered as a front line of advance. Consequently the Church has been on the defensive culturally fearing that the wisdom of the world would make inroads and ultimately replace the Christian message. With this kind of fear it was quite natural that the in-

terest in culture was more nominal than real. Science and culture were looked upon as enemies rather than as allies of the Faith. The question, "Is there any connection between the Christian faith and the intellectual activity which is the essence of higher education?" has been answered rather negatively by the majority of the members of the Christian Church.

This kind of attitude on the part of the Church is evidenced by the fact that institutions of higher learning, and especially liberal arts colleges, are judged not in terms of the intellectual climate of the campus, but in terms of the personal, religious and moral life of the faculty and students. Dr. Kenneth Brown, Executive Director of the Danforth Foundation, puts this rather pointedly in the following quotation:

"And the college calling itself Christian in seeking to sell itself to the parent-church as a worthy offspring, worthy of more generous support, has often been tempted to present in its show-window not the intellectual strengths of the institution—strong, exciting teaching, and strong, exciting learning—but rather the array of pre-ministerial students, the figures on student church attendance, the denominational affiliations of the faculty, the number of church suppers eaten by the president—interesting data, but not basic to Christian Education."

To be sure, these things are important, of prime importance, but they do not determine to what extent an institution of higher learning is Christian. A church college may have its chapel and its opportunities for worship, instruction in religion and whatever else belongs to the devotional side of life, but this is not Christian education. "Unfortunately, this is perhaps the most widely prevalent concept of Christian education, even among church people, and often among ministers. . . . If this idea of Christian education is to be considered as valid, then the cost of administration and instruction in the fields of mathematics, physics, history, chemistry, English, and all the other subjects outside the field of Bible and religion is too great a price to pay for the privilege of having required courses in Bible and compulsory chapel. The concept of addition can be devastating when applied to Christianity. For Christianity is no little "plus" added onto secular life and thought. It is no thin icing spread over the outside of a black cake to make it look white. Christianity is basic . . . it is normative . . . to compartmentalize it is to imprison it, to nullify it."<sup>1</sup> A Christian college will consider these activities which belong to what may be called the *Order of Charity* indispensable for the attainment of her objective—students and faculty should willingly and wholeheartedly support the religious program of the college and should identify themselves rather intimately with the work and worship of the Church. But this is not enough. All this can be done and the aim that justifies the existence of the college has not been touched. The development of the intellect is the only

<sup>1</sup>Frank H. Caldwell, *Christian Education, the Church, and I* as quoted by Howard Lowry in *The Mind's Adventure* (Westminster Press, Philadelphia: 1950) p. 104.

aim which justifies the existence of a college even if it does not remain the sole aim of a Christian college.

To us who are in the Christian college it would seem entirely logical and reasonable to have the Church criticize us for being delinquent in the area of scholarship and more specifically in the area of Christian scholarship. It is our function to interpret the Church to the world and the world to the Church. The Christian liberal arts college is the bridge between faith and culture. The world must realize that Christian faith does not stifle knowledge, but that it unifies and integrates. The Church must recognize that God becoming Man in Jesus Christ gives our faith a natural and historical setting. Therefore, the work of the philologist, archaeologist, historian, scientist, philosopher contributes to the growth of the faith. Without the contributions of these scholars Christianity might develop into a "mystery cult," a religion of spirit without being grounded in nature and history. Faith is God's gift. What Christians believe God did in Jesus Christ, his life, his death, his resurrection, stands on its own merits and needs no support from what we may call the Order of Mind. From this acknowledgement, however, it does not follow that the use of the mind is dangerous to belief, that it hinders belief, that it is of secondary value. We consider creation and incarnation two cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, yet frequently give them little more than lip service. The universe takes its origin from God and the incarnation gives the faith historical dimensions so succinctly expressed in the Apostles' Creed by the words, "suffered under Pontius Pilate." The God of salvation is the God of creation and time. "Man's intellectual world is of vital concern for the Church because this is the heart of the cultural context in which it is and in which man thinks and acts."<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the history of mankind various relations have existed between faith and culture, or faith and reason. Each has been claimed to be primary and various combinations of the two have characterized the Western religious tradition. When Tertullian in the early Church scornfully asked, "What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem? What between the Academy and the Church?" he expressed a point of view which is never absent from Christian thought. There are supposedly two wholly distinct bodies of truth — the one is all-important, the other of little value; and not only is the Christian faith of prime importance, it is also beyond all criticism from the "wisdom of the world," and it is difficult to see why a Christian should have an interest in this kind of wisdom.

<sup>2</sup>Bernard Anderson, *Rediscovery of the Bible* (New York: Association Press, 1951) p. 38.

We need not consider this view too seriously, for the two-fold reason that, first, anyone who opens his mouth in rational speech involves the faith in rational categories, and second, the plain facts are that many a Christian has felt himself called to be a scholar. Scholarship has played a large role in the development of Christianity, as evidenced by 16th century thought. Many Christians have felt an interest in scholarship and have felt it to be their specific calling to devote their lives to indicate by example and by means of the written word how Christ and culture are related. Not that the human mind will ever fully understand what God has done in Christ, but it is a fact—the fact of all facts—that God has given the revelation of himself in a person who was promised, proclaimed, and who in the fullness of time appeared in history. Here we enter upon the area of the mind. When a Christian is a scholar, Christian scholarship is a spiritual necessity. To insist on separating his Christian beliefs from his work as a scholar would cut his life in two. For him the acceptance of the revelation of God in Christ is the most profound of all his experiences. It touches and transforms all other strands of his complex existence. His faith and scholarship are one. He must choose between being a Christian scholar and not being a Christian at all.

Another approach is to make reason primary and exclude faith. This position asserts that the question of God must be answered solely by discursive reason and the answer is always in the negative. From the time of Sophists to the present there have been many adherents. Today the position is expressed most adequately by the logical positivists. They claim that all propositions are either empirical or formal—there is no other meaningful language. All statements not so classifiable are consigned to the limbo of nonsense. Discussions about God are neither true nor false in any significant sense of those words, but simply meaningless. Religion has no cognitive significance. All such significance is reserved for scientific and formal languages. Meaning and verification are identified — i.e. what cannot be verified is meaningless.<sup>3</sup>

This point of view has been very popular in American universities and colleges. Some fifteen years ago Mortimer Adler made the charge that 85% of the professors in our colleges and universities were positivists. This may have been an exaggerated guess, but no one will deny that it is still rather popular among intellectuals, for as recently as last December Professor Howard Becker, Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, said that American sociologists are still primarily

<sup>3</sup>John Hutchison *Reason, Faith and Existence* (New York: Oxford Press) p. 44.

\*The word "philosophical" as determined by the context means anti-historical and anti-spiritual.

positivists. Christianity has no place of standing. The Christian faith can be introduced into thought only at the cost of denying to him who introduces it the status of a genuine scholar — for all religious dimensions are undemonstrable and therefore indefinable.

It must be admitted that teachers in church-related colleges have too often been overawed by this cult of objectivity. During the past forty years a philosophy of education has arisen which has been expressed in narrow bio-physical terms. It has been referred to as the genetic approach. Man approaches his world of knowledge in the same way as the lower animal seeks to know his world. Man and animal are organisms which must adjust themselves to the demands of this physical world if they are to survive. Man and animal think in order that they may eat. That which motivates is the physical, not the larger historical or spiritual potentialities. These latter are considered to be fads and fancies, or at best additions to, but never an integral part of the nature and destiny of man's search for knowledge. William E. Drake, Professor of Education at the University of Missouri, claims that our American education is both anti-religious and anti-philosophical. "Probably the greatest deficiency in American education during the recent decades has been the anti-philosophical\* attitude so blatantly reflected in most, if not all, areas of education."<sup>4</sup>

It is not difficult to understand how this approach became very popular within the framework of a highly urbanized, technological and industrial society. The objective aspect of knowledge is good as far as it goes and when it is used where it belongs; but when this approach becomes an "all or none," a religious or poetic approach becomes impossible. It is understandable that this attitude has gained favor during the past forty years. Human beings crave certainty and therefore tend to identify publicly verified knowledge which is indispensable in a technological age with truth. For this reason science has been heralded as the acme of man's knowledge. "All the stress on objective certainty and exactness have undermined the use of reason to illumine man's living decisions. Science is good, and very good, in its place. Only when it prevents and disrupts intellectual, moral, and spiritual knowledge so far as these can be had, is the use of science an enemy of human welfare and of truth. This fact is now becoming a matter of general understanding."<sup>5</sup>

Ferré goes on to point out the difference between what he calls "validity" and "adequacy." Demonstrable knowledge, scientific knowledge, belong to the realm of validity. Validity ought to be sought with

<sup>4</sup>Winter issue of *Bulletin American Association of University Professors*, 1957.

<sup>5</sup>Nels Ferré, *The Christian Faith and Higher Education* (New York: Harper's Press, 1954) p. 177.

all critical care. But in addition to areas where validity is high, there are areas of personal and social wisdom which cannot be logically or scientifically demonstrated, yet these areas have high practical relevance for personal and social choices. "The reaching out to see things together and in relation to the concrete needs of life and society is called adequacy."<sup>6</sup> It may very well be that in some such distinction as this we must look for the relevance of the Christian faith. The Christian faith is an attitude, a belief assumed toward life, which transforms both thought and conduct. Adequacy puts knowledge into a context, the context that all knowledge must be seen in its relationship to the whole of life. Adequacy prevents the abuse of science and yet serves as a creative spur. Explanations that stop short of context stop short of factual truth. Adequacy delivers science from being abused as scientism. We need science to be science more than ever; but we need more than science. One of the real marks of maturity on the educational scene is the understanding of a distinction such as has been made here. Validity cannot be equated with knowledge. It is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition. The Christian welcomes the contributions that have been made and are yet being made in terms of validity, but he knows that his thinking must be set in a more inclusive framework.

It cannot be denied that church-related colleges have been influenced by this kind of educational philosophy. That they should have been conditioned by such a philosophy is quite reasonable. Twentieth century institutions are naturally products of the thinking of the day. Not to be so influenced would be proof of the fact that we are not sensitive to the changes of an ever-changing society. But to be conditioned and to be determined are two different things. To be conditioned is quite proper; to be determined by the fashions of the day may well mean that we have been shorn of all critical powers, that we are bankrupt religiously and spiritually—bankrupt in the sense that the Christian faith is simply an aroma which adds religious sanctity to our cultural aims, but in no wise gives direction or meaning to these aims. We find ourselves in a position of "split adaptation."

The educational philosophy of the church college has been well stated by E. Harris Harbison in the Hazen Foundation essay entitled, "Religious Perspectives in College Teaching." He says, "While no man can know the meaning of history—his faith that there is meaning in history may perhaps be counted to him as knowledge in the same sense that faith is counted to the Protestant believer as righteousness." What makes history meaningful? It is the belief that God is at work in it, and that His

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

purposes are influential within the events of the past and the present and the yet unknown future. Faith means that the core of history is the history of redemption — *Heilsgeschichte*. But this redemption is not possible within history. We are to look for redemption outside of, yet operating within, culture. History is not *just* history, it does not exist for its own sake, but within it we find an active God reconciling the world unto Himself. In this way the Christian faith becomes not only a portion of knowledge, but it becomes its only true condition.

The stage of nature and history becomes the scene of man's redemption. Redemption cannot be understood, nor fully appreciated, without an understanding of both nature and history. Faith does not operate in a vacuum, but it has been clothed in a temporal and natural garment. Faith is not grounded in time or in human culture, yet if it is to have meaning for temporal, natural man, it must reach down where he lives in the here and now. This is the heart of the doctrine of the incarnation. Creation and incarnation mark Christianity as a religion existing in time and culture. To deny this is to resort either to mysticism or naturalism. Whatever we know about God has been made known in history. The meaning of the Christian faith is in history although its center lies beyond. History is the story of man's life. This is our faith and in this faith we teach.

The Christian faith should have a place in the intellectual life of the college, not as a side issue, but as something vital. It may well be that the business of the various classrooms is chemistry, sociology, psychology, economics, mathematics, etc., and that these have no direct relationship to the faith. "However, all areas of study have around them a sort of penumbra, the pressing immediacy of life, an area of problems and questions to which the mind jumps and in which the empirical method of scientific thought cannot properly grasp nor competently deal with the questions which arise. It is at just this critical point where the student gets the impact of the teacher's assumptions about the nature of man, the nature of reality and the universe and other matters with which religion is concerned."<sup>7</sup>

It is at this point that the church colleges have been not only conditioned by the narrow bio-physical educational philosophy of the past forty years, but almost completely determined. The teacher in the church college has been just as naive an empiricist as teachers in non-church related institutions. Insofar as he has expressed his faith it has been on the level of the Order of Charity, but he has looked upon his classroom

<sup>7</sup>Article, "Specialization and Secularism in Higher Education" (March issue of *The Christian Scholar*, 1957) p. 57.

responsibility to be a capable teacher in his field as judged by the conditions of validity. But has he not thought of his field in too narrow a sense? Where are we to set down the limits of man, of life, of any particular classroom discipline? Whatever can be understood in terms of validity or of what I prefer to call The Casual Order is certainly not the whole of man or of the universe. The twentieth century professor has made the identification all too frequently whether in a state institution or in the church college. The state institutions are not "godless." Some of the most consecrated men and women are on their faculties. When I was teaching at Penn State there were at least eighty-five faculty members who were members of the Faculty Christian Fellowship group. Their concern and love for the Christian faith was a real inspiration and just as vital as in the men and women in our own colleges. This is the difference. In the church college we stand under the judgment of faith not only as individuals, but the very institution in which we teach has for her objective "to introduce the student to the organized fields of learning, interpreted through the Christian view of the world, man and his culture, based upon revealed truth as presented in the Word of God. . . ."<sup>8</sup> If this objective is to be carried out in the life of the college, then we cannot remain naive empiricists confining our classroom technique to an analysis of the Casual Order. This is, of course, a necessary condition and must be done as vigorously by us as by other scholars regardless of the type of institution by whom they are employed. Although necessary, it is not enough. The "not enough" must not be interpreted as meaning that something additional must be done, that something must be added. The "not enough" is a qualitative deficiency. Truth short of the whole truth (whole here means qualitatively short, for by the quantitative measure all truth is deficient) is not adequate for the life of man. The classroom must produce more than chemists, sociologists, psychologists, etc. It must produce men and women who in thought and action can subject life to the critique of faith. The Christian college is a community of scholars, both teachers and students, who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and who are committed to a divine truth revealed unto men. To proceed on the road of life whether personally or academically on any other basis would be insincere and utterly false. The Christian must take the contribution made by non-Christians as well as by Christians, and allow the light of faith to illumine all of life and experience.

Analogies prove nothing, yet it may well be that our understanding of the relation between faith and the academic discipline must be viewed in the context of an analogy. When we deal with the Christian faith

<sup>8</sup>Hope College Statement of Objectives (Hope College Bulletin).

we deal with a dimension which is non-spatial, non-temporal, yet it has a bearing on the temporal-spatial scene, for nothing can be put into its proper place in life until the meaning of life itself has been clarified. This meaning will not be found apart from the faith and it is equally true the faith is not a sufficient condition for establishing the meaning in its truest and fullest sense. Ever since the announcement of the theory of relativity it is no longer possible to locate an object or event by giving its spatial and temporal dimensions, but only when their space-time is known can they be truly located. So nothing in life can be truly known until we see it in terms of the Casual Order and the Christian faith. Faith is the larger perspective in which the Casual Order is to be viewed. By itself the Casual Order is only part of the story—a very important part—a part that can be told only in terms of higher education, but nevertheless inadequate to be the norm of our cultural life. Man's intellectual world ought to be of vital concern to the Church because this is the heart of the cultural context in which she exists and performs her healing function.

Today the world is engaged in a battle for the mind of men. To win this battle the Church and the college must join hands. The Church must realize that the prime business of the college is to engage in first-rate intellectual activity and unless this is accomplished, no matter how zealous the college may be in other matters, she has forfeited her *raison d'être*. All the intellectual activity will, on the other hand, be without redemptive value unless the college accepts the faith as it is channeled through the Church. No easy or tragic optimism may be found in either, but the faith which is the possession of the Church will be lost as a critique of existence and culture unless the Church encourages the college by word and deed to be an institution of higher learning and not simply a trade school or an institution with a religious aroma, where saints rather than scholars are encouraged and commended. It is not the function of the college to instill the faith. That is the solemn obligation of the home and Church. It is our duty to enable the young men and women who come to us from Christian homes to give expression to that faith in the life and thought of today. The college builds the superstructure upon the foundation which has been laid by home and Church. There must come from the home, the Church, and the college, a constant supply of men and women ready to work patiently in the stations where God has placed them, each in his or her own sphere, struggling to work out what it means to be a Christian in that place. Many of these stations are in the areas of culture, of social and governmental service, of international relations, where pious resolutions born outside of a knowledge gained by a study of the intellectual disciplines may do more harm than

good. The Christian voice will be heard in these areas if, and only if, there are men and women qualified for their tasks in terms of the Casual Order and motivated by the love of God in Christ. Such men and women are the products of Church and college . . . products of the Church when the Church teaches and preaches the Good News of the Gospel, and products of the college when the college is encouraged to analyze the Casual Order since it, too, is part of God's creation and his revelation in Christ. The Church concerned with the Order of Charity, the college with the Order of the Mind; the one preaching, the other teaching.

## CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

In the last few weeks of this school year we have had a very interesting and practical series of Adelphic meetings. The Rev. Donald Buteyn told us about the unique work of the Midland Ref. Church, one of our young churches. Dr. Raymond Van Heukelom gave some very helpful ideas for our contacts with dispensationalism. Dr. Marion De Velder presented a challenge to us in his lecture, "Ministerial Ethics." The Rev. Abraham Rynbrandt discussed what the Bible says about divorce and how we could cope with its many problems. The Rev. Theodore Schoop gave enlightening comments on "How to Conduct a Consistory." For our joint Calvin-Western meeting in Holland, Dr. Clarence De Graaf, of the Hope College English Department, spoke on "The Preacher and Language." We experienced a wonderful time of Christian fellowship with our sister seminary as more than 140 students and faculty members were in attendance from the two schools.

The Reverend William Hiemstra, who has recently become a pastor-counsellor at the Pine Rest Hospital, spoke to the Seminary Family and guests on Thursday, April 11, on two occasions. His messages were entitled "Crisis Ministry," and "Symptoms of Nervous and Men-

tal Disorders, and Care of Such Patients." Pastor Hiemstra was affiliated with the Christian Sanitorium in Wyckoff, New Jersey from 1949 to 1956. His insights and suggestions were very much appreciated.

The Seminary was happy to be the host for the meetings of the Christian Association for Psychological Studies on March 27 and 28. Theme of the conference was sounded by Dr. John Daling, Calvin College, in his keynote address "Toward a Christian Concept of Personality." In the evening session which was open to the public The Rev. Granger Westberg, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Religion and Health of Chicago University, delivered an address on "Religion and Medical Education." The meeting was then opened to the audience for questions and comments. The sessions began with a joint worship service in the seminary chapel with the Seminary faculty and students led by Dr. C. Kromminga, Calvin Seminary. We rejoice with the formation of this new group in making the Reformed witness heard in the psychological fields.

Miss Grace Pelon and Miss Elsie Stryker from the Board of Education were on the campus Tuesday, May 6, to present the Presbyterian

Graded Lesson materials. These graded lessons are published by our denomination in cooperation with The United Presbyterian Church in the United States. They gave a complete survey of the materials available in this area of study, and also presented some very helpful pointers for introducing and using the material in the Church School.

The Christian Action Group at Western has experienced an interesting and profitable year. The meetings, which were well attended both by students and faculty, were held monthly. Topics and leaders for the various meetings were as follows:

"The Church's Responsibility for Her Mentally Incompetent," Ronald Brown.

"Is 'Apartheid' a Christian Program," Dr. E. Eenigenburg.

"Religion in Contemporary Politics," Arthur De Jong.

"Evangelizing Youth in a Typical American Community," Lloyd Arnoldink.

"Is the Church Leading or Lagging in the Solving of Integration?", Julius Brandt.

"How Can a Church Best Minister to a Heterogeneous or Homogeneous Community?", Len De Beer and Charles Vander Beek.

On Thursday, May 2, we were honored to have the Rt. Rev. David Chellappa, Bishop in Madras,

Church of South India on our campus. This was his first official public appearance in the States after being brought to this country by our Board of Foreign Missions. He spoke to us both in the morning and in the afternoon about the Church of South India; how it was formed, some of the problems involved, and the relationship of the bishopric to the Church. As a student body and faculty, we were all inspired and better informed through the Bishop about the Church of South India.

The Student Body gathered in the Commons on Friday, May 3, to elect new Adelphic officers and a President of the Student Body. The officers for the Adelphic society are:

President: Leonard De Beer

Vice Pres.: Kermit Hogenboom

Secretary: Irven Jungling

Treasurer: Ron Brown

Recreation: John Adams

Social Chairman: Don Den Hartog

The Student-Faculty Council has adopted a revised constitution this year which called for a President to be elected in the Spring of the year from the incoming Senior Class. The Council hopes that with this new procedure the activities of the Student Body can be better co-ordinated and that this will make it possible for the Student Body to function as a unit from the very beginning of the school year. Robert Nykamp was elected to this of-

fice. The remainder of the Student Council will be elected by each class and by the Faculty in the fall.

Many student hours in the third quarter of this year went into the planning and directing of the Bible Conference, "Operation Victory," sponsored by the Holland-Zeeland Classes of the Reformed Church on April 14-18. Featured speaker for the week was Dr. Arnold Grey Barnhouse, pastor of the historic Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, editor of *Eternity* magazine, and president of the Evangelical Foundation. Students filled many jobs during the campaign: everything from publicity director, head usher, music chairman, song-leader, and personal worker, to press reporter and general handyman. Many were the blessings, and great was the thrill to see the great civic center auditorium at Holland filled again and again with a total of ten thousand people.

At a special chapel service, conducted by President J. R. Mulder on Friday, May 17, the following awards were presented:

The Rev. George N. Makely prizes in,

Sermon Content—1st, J. Meeuwsen; 2nd, J. Van Hoeven.

Sermon Delivery — 1st, J. Busman; 2nd, L. Veenstra.

O.T. Language and Literature — 1st, John Hoekstra; 2nd, C. Klein and P. Vostello.

N.T. Language and Literature — 1st, V. Hoffman; 2nd, D. De Haan. Systematic Theology — Tie, L. Veenstra and J. Meeuwsen.

The Vander Ploeg Church History Prize to: 1st, R. Nykamp; 2nd, C. Klein.

The De Kleine English Bible Prize to: 1st, A. Brower; 2nd, R. Brown.

The Henry W. Pietenpol Prize for General Excellence to Senior L. Akker.

The Student Body with the Faculty and Officers of the Board of Trustees as their honored guests met on May 17 for the annual semi-formal banquet. Jack Boerigter was master of ceremonies, Bill Bouwer led the singing, and vocal numbers were presented by Charles Johnson and by Gordon and Earl Laman. The charge to the Seniors was given by Dr. H. Bast and Tom Thomasma responded for the Seniors. Mr. Henry Kleinheksel, a layman from Maplewood Church, Holland, challenged each person with the main address — "The Renaissance and the Reformation." This banquet again proved to be one of the highlights of the school year.

The Seniors and the areas of service to which they have been called as announced at the time of commencement are as follows:

L. Akker, Aplington Church, Iowa.

R. Bender, People's Park Church, Paterson, N. J.

J. Boerigter, Fourth Church, Kalamazoo, Mich.

G. Boogerd, Sinking Valley Church, Kentucky.

R. Bouwkamp, Lanark Church, Illinois.

J. Brandt, Immanuel Church, Belmond, Iowa.

J. Brinkhuis, Willow Lake, S. D.

J. Busman, Greenwood Church, Kalamazoo, Mich.

D. Cornell, Congregational Church, Saugatuck, Mich.

E. De Hoogh, Bethany Church, Des Moines, Iowa.

R. De Vries, Newhall Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

R. Dykstra, Florida Church, Amsterdam, N. Y.

R. Evers, Unity Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

R. Jackson, Tinley Park Church, Illinois.

D. Jansma, Three Oaks Church, Michigan.

C. Johnson, Meservey, Iowa.

W. Kiel, Brooklyn Church, Cleveland, Ohio.

E. Laman, Nooksack Church, Washington.

E. Martin, Ontario Church, New York.

J. Meeuwsen, Unassigned.

N. Menning, Allison Church, Iowa.

H. Opperman, Monarch, Canada.

R. Pronk, Unassigned.

R. Pruiksma, Athens and Kiskatom, N. Y.

T. Rynbrandt, Chino Church, Chino, Calif.

P. Shih, Princeton Seminary.

R. Smith, San Jose Community, Calif.

R. Teusink, Chancellor Church, South Dakota.

T. Thomasma, Hope Church, Montevideo, Minn.

C. Vander Beek, Rose Park Church, Holland, Mich.

J. Van Hoeven, Army Chaplaincy.

L. Veenstra, Hope Church, South Haven, Mich.

K. Vermeer, Army Hospital Chaplaincy, Houston, Tex.

N. Webster, Army Chaplaincy.

R. Zap, Williamson Church, New York.

A joyous time was had by all at the Alumni banquet preceding the graduation exercises on May 22 at Trinity Reformed Church. The members of the graduating class were the guests of the association, and were introduced by President J. R. Mulder, and were welcomed by the president of the Association, the Rev. Harold Englund. A report was given on the progress of the donation of five dollars by each member to the newly formed Library Book fund, which amounted to \$909.00. The Rev. Harry Hoffs, graduate of the Class 1917, and Hospital Chaplain, was the speaker. The new officers of the organization are as follows: President, Dr. R. R. Van Heukelom; Vice Presi-

dent, the Rev. John Nieuwsma; Secretary, the Rev. Henry Mollema; Treasurer, the Rev. Henry A. Mouw.

Following the Alumni Dinner, the Seventy-second commencement took place in Hope Memorial Chapel. One of our largest crowds was presented. President John R. Mulder presided. The retiring president of the Board, the Rev. John

M. Hains, conducted the devotions. Dr. Henry Kuizenga, minister of First Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan, gave the address, entitled, "Thoughts About the New Life." The Seminary Choir, under the direction of Mr. Nevin Webster, sang two numbers. After the service friends and relatives were invited to congratulate the graduates as all met in the Seminary Building for fellowship and for light refreshments in our Commons.

## BEARDSLEE LIBRARY NEW BOOK SHELF

These books may be borrowed by mail for a three week period.

Anderson, C. *To the Golden Shore*. 1956. (Biography of Adoniram Judson)

Armstrong, M. W. *The Presbyterian Enterprise*. 1956.

Barclay, W. *A New Testament Word Book*. 1955.

Bentzen, A. *King and Messiah*. 1955.

Berkouwer, G. C. *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*. 1956.

Boogs, W. H. *Faith Healing and the Christian Faith*. 1956.

Butterfield, H. *Man on His Past*. 1955.

Cairns, D. *The Image of God in Man*. 1953.

Coffin, H. W. *Joy in Believing*. 1956.

Coulton, G. G. C. *Life in the Middle Ages*. 1955.

De Koster, L. *All Ye That Labor*. 1957.

Dibelius, M. *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*. 1956.

Faculty of Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va. *Essential Books for a Pastor's Library*. 1955.

Finegan, J. *Wanderer upon Earth*. 1956.

Flack, E. and Metzger, B. *Texts, Canons and Principle Versions of the Bible*. 1956.

Fritsch, C. T. *The Quamran Community*. 1956.

Gesell, A. *The Child from Five to Ten*. 1946.

Gesell, A. *Youth: The Years from Ten to Sixteen*. 1956.

Goodspeed, E. J. *The Key to Ephesians*. 1956.

Gosselink, M. *The Days of Youth*. 1956.

Green, B. *Being and Believing*. 1956.

Hahn, M. E. *Counseling Psychology*. 1956.

Harbison, E. H. *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation*. 1956.

Harmon, N. B. *Understanding the Methodist Church*. 1956.

Harris, S. *Skid Row*. 1955.

Hazleton, R. *God's Way with Man*. 1956.

Hendrickson, R. C. *Youth in Danger*. 1956.

Hendry, G. S. *The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology*. 1956.

Herklotz, H. G. G. *Publicans and Sinners*. 1956.

High, S. *Billy Graham*. 1956.

Hoffman, J. W. *Mission, U.S.A.* 1956.

Hofman, H. *The Theology of Reinbold Niebuhr*. 1956.

Hulme, W. E. *Counseling and Theology*. 1956.

Hutchison, J. A. *Faith, Reason and Existence*. 1956.

Jackson, E. N. *How to Preach to People's Needs*. 1956.

Jansen, J. F. *Guests of God*. 1956.

Jenkins, D. *Believing in God*. 1956.

Kean, C. D. *God's Word to His People*. 1956.

Keighton, R. E. *The Man Who Would Preach*. 1956.

Kelly, B. H. *Tools for Bible Study*. 1956.

Knox, J. *The Early Church and the Coming Great Church*. 1955.

Kraeling, E. G. *The Old Testament Since the Reformation*. 1956.

Ladd, G. E. *The Blessed Hope*. 1956.

LeFevre, P. D. *The Prayers of Kierkegaard*. 1956.

MacLennan, D. A. *Entrusted with the Gospel*. 1956.

Martin, J. *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead*. 1956.

Martin, W. *The Rise of the Cults*. 1955.

Matthews, W. R. *Some Christian Words*. 1956.

Miller, A. *The Renewal of Man*. 1955.

Miller, R. C. *Biblical Theology and Christian Education*. 1956.

Miller, R. C. *Education for Christian Living*. 1956.

Minear, P. S. *Jesus and His People*. 1956.

Morton, H. V. *The Women of the Bible*. 1956.

Moquinckel, S. *He That Cometh*. 1956.

Muehl, W. *Politics for Christians*. 1956.

Murphy, L. B. *Personality in Young Children*. 1956.

Nichols, J. H. *The History of Christianity, 1650-1950*. 1956.

Niebuhr, H. R. *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*. 1956.

Niles, D. T. *Preaching the Gospel of the Resurrection*. 1954.

Norwood, F. A. *The Development of Modern Christianity*. 1956.

Nygren, A. *Christ and His Church*. 1956.

Perowne, S. *Life and Times of Herod the Great*. 1956.

Pierce, C. A. *Conscience in the New Testament*. 1955.

Rainsford, M. *Our Lord Prays for His Own*. 1955.

Ringgren, H. *The Messiah in the Old Testament*. 1956.

Rowlingson, D. T. *Introduction to New Testament Study*. 1956.

Schlatter, A. *The Church in the New Testament Period*. 1956.

Sessler, J. J. *Story Talks from Animal Life*. 1956.

Shauall, M. R. *Encounter with Revolution*. 1955.

Shaver, E. L. *The Weekday Church School*. 1956.

Smith, C. R. *The Bible Doctrine of Grace and Related Doctrines*. 1956.

Snavely, G. E. *The Church and the Four Year College*. 1955.

Taylor, K. *Nectar in a Sieve*. 1955. (A novel based on village life in India)

Van Til, C. *Christianity and Idealism*. 1955.

Van Til, C. *The Defense of the Faith*. 1955.

Vernadsky, G. *A History of Russia*. 1954.

Weigle, L. A. *Bible Words that have Changed Meaning*. 1955.

Weinlick, J. R. *Count Zinzen-dorf*. 1956.

Wheeler, W. R. *The Man Sent from God*. 1956. (A biography of Robert E. Speer)

Wilder, A. N. *New Testament Faith for Today*. 1955.

Wolfson, H. A. *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*. 1956.

Wolseley, R. *Writing for the Religious Market*. 1956.

Wyon, O. *Consider Him*. 1957.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Message of the Fourth Gospel*, by Eric Lane Titus, New York: Abingdon Press, 1957. Pp. 253. \$3.50.

The *raison d'être* claimed for this new commentary is the author's adherence to "a fundamental approach which has been followed throughout:" (1) the gospel is entirely an interpretation of Jesus; there is no attempt by the evangelist to be bound by historical limitations; (2) the evangelist's literary techniques must be understood before the gospel can be understood; (3) the evangelist is assumed to have been "a popular religionist, not a philosopher;" (4) his major sources were Paul and the Synoptics with Hellenism only an atmosphere; (5) the gospel is best treated by sections rather than verse by verse.

Dr. Titus, currently professor of New Testament literature at Southern California School of Theology in Los Angeles, here presents further research on the fourth gospel following the task he took in the recent publication, *The Gospel of the Spirit*, which he wrote in conjunction with his teacher, Ernest C. Colwell of the University of Chicago. The approach outlined above admittedly consists of a series of assumptions, assumptions, however, which have their genesis in the study of the gospel itself. Of them all, the first and fourth assumptions seem to be most open to question. That John has arranged his gospel's account of the life of Jesus in a framework of theological interpretation is recognized by the great majority of Biblical students, but it is going too great a step beyond that to say the historical elements are entirely incidental to the interpretation. Especially in the passion story this view does the

gospel injustice. Objection should also be raised with the restriction of the atmosphere of the gospel to Hellenistic writers in general. At least the new impetus in finding the Johannine milieu as Judaistic deserves more notice than the footnote on page 61. The Qumran writings' influence cannot be dismissed so summarily.

For the customary discussion of introductory problems the reader is referred to the manuals of introduction of his choice. The introduction of this book is built more in accordance with the approach. As a result of the second assumption the author begins with the evangelist's literary method. This chapter is probably the most fascinating part of the book. The reader may not agree that all the eleven types of literary technique were consciously in the mind of the author of the fourth gospel, but he will find the discussion stimulating.

The Spirit is the unifying concept of the evangelist, according to the commentator. This carries forward the theme of the Colwell and Titus work. The prologue, then, is used for the introduction primarily not of the Logos doctrine, but the descent of the Spirit, i.e., the Incarnation. Thus he unites the prologue and the conclusion, both being comings of the Spirit, the former upon Jesus, the latter upon his disciples.

The commentary sensibly avoids the printing of either the Greek or English text (or two English texts as in the *Interpreter's Bible*). The student should not be required to buy an extra copy of the text every time he buys a commentary.

The treatment of John 6 by Dr. Titus is illustrative of his comments: "In view of the highly mystical and spiritual teaching which precedes vs. 51, the ref-

erence to flesh is like a trap, baited for the Jews to spring. And spring it they do! 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' The answer of Jesus strikes as 'low' a level as can be imagined: the Jews must eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood in order to obtain eternal life. . . . This revision to a crassly material level is for a purpose. For one thing it makes contact with the sacramental practice of the Christian Church—a practice which the evangelist may now correct" (p. 121).

The approach used in the commentary produces an interesting but not convincing structure in which the educational and theological background of the author is apparent.

—SYL SCORZA

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*Faith, Hope, and Love*, by Emil Brunner, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956. Pp. 5-79.  
\$1.50.

Shortly after I read this booklet by Dr. Brunner, I turned my attention to a work written by a certain Caryl Chessman, and entitled *Cell 2455, Death Row*, containing the author's life story, and written while he was awaiting execution in San Quentin's gas chamber. The combination of these readings served as a very forceful reminder to me that all genuine theology must be "practical" theology without ceasing to be theology, relating the Word of God to the realities of human existence, and thus supplying the foundation for preaching that really has something to say to people in their need—a word unto life. Brunner knows how to write such theology.

Chessman, the condemned criminal, describes how haunted by the past, which he was sure could not be blotted out, and gripped by fear for the future, which he dared not face, he sought an escape in the world of hate,

rebellion and resentment. This is a problem of human existence, and therefore of the life of every human being. What life if possible for man in the present, when through guilt and anxiety every moment of this present seems to be threatened by the past and the future? Over against the existence unto death through guilt, anxiety and hate, Brunner places the message of faith, hope, and love—in Christ.

Faith, hope, and love are seen as each expressing the totality of Christian existence. This may sound contradictory, but becomes quite clear, as Brunner points out, if we recognize that this threefold totality is related to a basic fact of human existence, namely that we live in the three dimensions of time: past, future, and present. And the central thesis of this booklet is, that we live in the past by faith, in the future by hope, and in the present by love. And all these find their ground and being in the one reality: the living communion with the living Christ.

I, for one, am glad that Dr. Brunner's friends prevailed over him, so that contrary to his original intentions, he decided to have the lectures appear in print. They are popularly written, and easily understood. This does not mean, however, that for these addresses to laymen the author has abandoned the critical positions that are part of his theology. Some readers will therefore find themselves rejecting views, which had already been proven unacceptable to them in other works by Emil Brunner. But then, in the midst of disagreements—also theological disagreements—we sometimes sense the existence of a deeper level of a common faith and a common hope. This deeper level is at the same time the higher level, because there we meet in love.

—ISAAC C. ROTTENBERG

*Understanding and Counseling the Alcoholic*, by Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., New York: Abingdon Press, 1956. Pp. 1-252. \$3.75.

This book is divided into three parts or sections. The first part has to do with the understanding of the problem of alcoholism and consists of two chapters. The second part deals with some of the religious approaches made to the problem and has four chapters. These two sections are based upon the author's doctoral dissertation for Columbia University entitled, *Some Religious Approaches to the Problem of Alcoholism*. The third part deals with the minister's approach to the problem, and is the result of a research program carried on during studies at the Yale Summer School of Alcohol Studies using the questionnaire method. This last section has five chapters and presents a practical approach for the pastor.

This is one of the better books among the many that are being published on this particular problem. Six years of research serves as the basis for the findings the author presents to us. He does a great service in the first two chapters by clearing up much fuzzy thinking regarding the definition and cause of alcoholism. It is the church's problem not only because of the social implications of this evil but also because there are alcoholics in the church, or potential alcoholics, who are often unnoticed until they reach an advanced stage and become problems. For the pastor who is alert to the needs of people the author gives a great deal of good material, definitive in nature, that will help in early detection. There is a table of addictive patterns and a good questionnaire that will be helpful in determining when a person should be classed as an alcoholic.

The matter of whether alcoholism is a sickness or not is well handled. The author does not succumb to the sickness idea as it is often used by popular

writers and some schools of psychology. The whole matter is put in proper perspective by sound scientific research. He takes issue with Smith's theory that alcoholism is a metabolic disease and points out that some addicts shift from various drugs to alcoholism and vice-versa depending upon accessibility. All the author will admit at this point is that there may be the possibility of predisposing endocrine or chemical factors involved, but these cannot be the determinants. On the other hand he freely admits the importance of psychological factors in the soil of addiction that are found in all case histories examined. The alcoholic drinks because he is sick emotionally and mentally and not because he has an alcoholic sickness. Drinking beverage alcohol is an escape mechanism for his neurotic condition or a way in which he tries to handle his anxiety. It is much the same as other compulsive activity that marks neurotic behavior. Anyone who has done much counseling with alcoholics knows that there are underlying and deep-rooted personality problems that have been handled in an unhealthy manner. He has not been able to handle his fears, frustrations and guilt in a successful manner. Alcohol provided him with a temporary if not satisfactory solution.

When the author considers some religious approaches that have been used to meet the problem and the ethical issues involved, his liberal theology is evident. He devotes some space to the work of rescue missions, the Salvation Army, and the Emmanuel Movement. His knowledge and research in the field of missions and the Army seems inadequate. It is quite true that statistics in this area of operation are unreliable and often non-existent, yet one cannot easily discount the large contribution and effectiveness of these groups. Certainly redemption touches the core of personality and there are a number of institutions such as the Chicago Industrial League and the Harbor Light Mission

which do a sound piece of work in the matter of rehabilitation and medical service along with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Since there are slightly over four and one-half million alcoholics and a much larger number of problem drinkers in the United States, and the AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) group has 130,000 members, a good sound piece of research is needed to indicate the real value of the mission approach.

The author is fully convinced that AA is our greatest resource in providing aid for the alcoholic. It must be conceded that where the church has failed to face the problem with more than condemnation and excommunication, AA and the rescue missions offer the only good resources. It will do the pastor good to read in this volume or others concerning the work of AA. It must be admitted that too often AA has manifested a more Christlike approach to the alcoholic than the established church. Yet the very ground of their approach is essentially Christian in nature and should be exploited by the church to full advantage for the Kingdom of God. When the church turns from smug complacency and learns to love and understand, to accept and forgive, to be patient and encourage, to counsel and minister the Gospel in love, then she will be making a positive answer to a pressing social problem.

The last section of the book will be of value to all those interested in helping the alcoholic. There are some general principles of counseling procedure and technique given that are sound and can be used to good advantage by a pastor. One cannot be hesitant in classifying alcoholism as sin. It is not some kind of distortion that needs correction. Here the counselor must have a sound psychological as well as Biblical concept of personality. The Biblical revelation must not be watered down or misused. The minister who is armed with the truth of the Gospel and sound psychological technique can perform real

service for the Lover of Souls. The author feels that education is the great task of the church in preventing alcoholism. This was tried with the problem of crime and only succeeded in filling penal institutions with educated criminals. What is needed is education that is redemptive in nature and purpose. When education evangelizes there is hope for sound and enduring solutions. This book is highly recommended to ministers and counselors for study and practical use.

—JOHN R. STAAT

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*The Use of Music in Christian Education*, by Vivian Sharp Morsch. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956. Pp. 7-171. \$3.00.

Here is an interesting and non-technical book which will prove valuable to all those who are concerned with music in the church and church school. Large and small churches alike will find this book a fine and usable addition in their library. Vivian Morsch writes with a thoroughly Christian approach and effectively quotes Scripture throughout to emphasize her points. She says, "The highest level of church music can never be attained, nor can its purposes be fulfilled, until congregations can recognize it and understand it as a means of communication with God and man" (p. 17).

The key to the book is understanding the author's creative approach to music. "Creative uses of music experiences will help to achieve the goals of Christian education" (p. 74). Mrs. Morsch cites the different techniques such as creative art experiences, field trips, role playing, and various other techniques which have been adapted by the Church School from secular education. Why has music not been approached creatively also? The author goes on to cite many examples to show how this can be done effectively. The book can be described as being filled cover to cover with chal-

lenging and usable suggestions. Music takes on new appeal, brings new adventures, and leads one into new worship experiences when used with the creative approach. Music is recognized in this book as a basic part of the worship experience, not just something which is tacked on to make worship more pleasurable or palatable. "Music and religion are related from the very first most primitive movement toward religious expression to the highest expression of pure religious feelings" (p. 44).

The book might be described as dividing itself into two sections: one concerning itself with an explanation or brief study of music and its basic relation to religious experience, and the other can almost be designated as a resource section.

The author lifts music to a new and higher level as she points out forcefully, "We need only to step into the average Sunday church school department and listen to the listless, toneless singing to realize that little, if any, plan (or thought) has gone into the use and integration of the music into the church school program and that the leaders have no understanding of the potency of music as an instrument of Christian education" (p. 16).

The author, however, does not stop at this point but proceeds to show church leaders how to adopt the best type of music for their situation. The book is laden with resources and principles to follow. Mrs. Morsch goes into detailed accounts of "experiences" which may be had in Christian education. The chapter titles will show the scope of the work: "Experiences with Singing," "Experiences with Instruments and Creating Music," "Rhythmic Experiences," "Listening Experiences," and "Music Experiences in the Age Groups of the Church School."

For one who is timid or feels unqualified in musical ability, the author gives encouragement. "The prevailing

idea that unless a teacher has musical ability and skill he is not fit to lead others into musical experience can be proved erroneous only through experience. The teacher's enthusiasm and ability to give confidence and encourage others in creativity is far more important than his own skill" (p. 47). It would be difficult to read this challenging book without becoming interested in trying out the experiences to prove their worth. Mrs. Morsch gives many detailed lists which may be used as check lists for churches to use in evaluating and reorganizing their music program. The short but important chapter on "Objectives and Standards for Music in Christian Education" should be read by all those who are involved in the music program of the church. One thought-provoking statement in the author's list of standards is, "To like a piece of music is not sufficient reason in itself for its inclusion in a curriculum. . . . Perhaps the song is not worthy of perpetuation" (p. 109). This should make any church school superintendent think.

The first quick reaction which many church leaders might have after reading this book is that the church school does not have time to be so particular about its music program. There are many important things to do on Sunday morning and giving so much time to music would not be wise. The author, however, has made several good suggestions on how to increase the time for music experiences and how to make the most of the time one has. Keeping in mind the author's thesis that "music has a large contribution to make to the teaching of religion in the church school" (p. 40), many church leaders will see at second glance how important it is to be concerned and will be anxious to adopt the author's tried and tested suggestions.

Five of the eighteen chapters are devoted to concerns of the choir: "Choirs and the Choir Director," "Christian Discipline and Church Choirs," "The Voice

in Singing and Choral Speaking," "Choir Organization and Rehearsals," and "Choir Repertoire." These chapters are helpful in setting up new choirs or in reorganizing or evaluating one. These chapters will encourage all choir directors in their efforts and help them to see how they can add new life and religious experience to both their choir rehearsals and performances.

To complete this well-organized book is a short but comprehensive bibliography which covers various topics in the field of music.

This book which proclaims in triumphant notes that "music is truly the 'handmaid of religion'" (p. 162) can not fail to challenge many. Music horizons will be enlarged for those who read these pages and teachers, superintendents, choir directors and directors of Christian Education will be left with a desire to try the author's approach in order that the richest experience might come from the use of good music in the church and church school.

—JOAN VAN RIPER

*Devotions and Prayers of Martin Luther*, selected and translated by Dr. Andrew W. Kosten, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956. Pp. 111. \$1.50.

This book presents fifty-two one-page devotions on the Psalms and as many brief prayers on facing pages. They have been translated into modern English by Dr. Andrew Kosten of the First Presbyterian Church of Ridgefield Park, New Jersey. It is suggested that by dwelling upon a single meditation and prayer each week, one would have several prayers committed to memory and a better understanding of about one third of the Psalms at the end of a year. The meditations are brief, ranging between 150 and 200 words, and the prayers are often just two or three sentences.

Naturally there is an inevitable limi-

tation in such brevity, but on each small page there is food for thought. Revealed in these pages are the strong faith of Martin Luther, his exalted conception of God, and his emphasis upon the grace of God. Though these are meditations upon verses in the Psalms, the reader's attention is often turned to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This little volume may well be added to our already abundant supply of devotional literature because the writer of these meditations and prayers has been recognized through the centuries as a man of devotion. It is said that even in the busiest periods of the Reformation Luther averaged two hours of prayer daily. Such a devotional life is almost incredible to our generation and surely has something to teach us. Here, for the English-speaking world, are brief insights into the mind and heart of the great Reformer.

—J. ROBERT STEEGSTRA

*Consider Him*, by Olive Wyon, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956. Pp. 64. \$1.00.

This small book consists of a brief introduction, three meditations on the Passion of our Lord, and two suggested "Acts of Worship." The author is a British theologian and writer. Intended primarily for use during Lent, it has inspirational value for any season of the year.

The introduction suggests that these meditations are intended to serve like a choirmaster's pitch pipe to help us check if the note of our life has slipped. For this purpose "it is far more important to turn our minds to God than it is to consider ourselves" (P. 9). Thus the title—*Consider Him*.

The three chapters deal with the supreme moments of Jesus' life on earth—in the Upper Room, in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the Cross. Each chapter suggests Scripture readings and contains appropriate prayers. Christ is

seen as the serene Lord of time in contrast to his busy and feverish enemies. His agony in Gethsemane reveals the completeness of his obedience. Two words of Christ from the Cross are dealt with briefly: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" and "It is finished." "So the cry 'It is finished' turns the Cross, the Tree of shame and failure into the Tree of life, the Tree of victory" (P. 48). The needed response to the passion of our Lord is seen as faith, hope, and love.

I believe this little volume well fulfills its purpose. It is a good aid to private worship. It is inspirational and well-written. It would make a fine gift.

—J. ROBERT STEEGSTRA

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*Life Victorious*, by Elmer Kettner and Paul G. Hansen, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956. Pp. vi-112. \$1.50.

This little book of sermons is written by two Lutheran ministers concerning the theme of Lenten days, and includes readings and hymns as used in the Lutheran Church. It is a paper bound book.

The first series of eight sermons dwells on the general subject of the victory for the life of the believer which is in Christ Jesus. The Scripture basis for each sermon is some experience of some character in the passion days of our Lord. The aim of the author, Elmer A. Kettner, is to meet practical problems by the use of Scripture thoughts from the closing days of the life of Christ. Therein he discusses how to overcome anxiety, conflicts, hatred, frustration, selfishness, etc.

The second series of sermons deals with the choices we make in our lives. The Scripture used in this series is

taken from a variety of Old Testament passages. One might expect that for a series in Lent the passages would be messianic, but these are not. These passages the author, Paul G. Hansen, uses to present the need of making wise choices in the Christian life, especially during the days of Lent. The passion of our Lord is not necessarily predominant in this series, although it certainly is not omitted.

In the reading of this book one seems to miss the thorough handling of the great themes of Scripture and of the Christian faith as one would expect them for the observance of Lent. There seems to be so strenuous an attempt to appeal by way of illustration from everyday life that the loftiness of great preaching is forfeited. It appears to this reviewer that the authors fall short in exalting the glory of the gospel as we would like to have it done. One also misses the orderliness, logic and grandeur of good sermonic structure.

Nonetheless, the book must be appreciated in that there is no equivocation on the cardinal points of the Christian faith. The evangelical position is clearly held. These points are set forth in plain statements. One ought also to appreciate the sincere endeavor that is made to meet man where he lives and present practical Christian instruction to him. Even though, in many instances, it seems that minor lessons are drawn from major themes, yet the major themes do have their own effectiveness. One will find thoughts and illustrations in these sermons, but for the glorious power of the passion of our Lord for our own preaching we likely will read other authors. In these sermons it is evident, however, that God's Word does not return to him fruitless.

—HENRY J. TEN CLAY

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